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## **THE GARDEN OF ASIA**



#  
THE  
**GARDEN OF ASIA**  
**IMPRESSIONS FROM JAPAN**

BY  
**REGINALD J. FARRER**

**SECOND EDITION**

**METHUEN & CO.  
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.  
LONDON**

42231

Rec'd Nov. 26, 1935

*First Published . August 1904  
Second Edition . . . . 1905*

**TO**  
**ALICE**  
**PRINCESS OF SIAM**  
**THIS BOOK IS OFFERED WITH**  
**GRATEFUL AFFECTION**



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## PREFACE

THIS little book is not intended as a Baedeker to Japan. Its aim has only been to translate into hopelessly inadequate words some aspects of the extraordinary charm which Japan offers to the observant. That charm cannot be rendered successfully into colours or coloured words. However, the attempt has so rarely been made that perhaps it is worth the making; and possibly this botchy sketch of fairyland may have interest for those who have never entered there, even as a worthless daub of a country unknown and unexplored has still some value in the eyes of the less fortunate who have never seen it. And to the ordinary Englishman Japan is a country entirely unknown. He cherishes on the matter ideas of a conventional and exaggerated futility. His conception is derived from the three weeks' sojourner in Yokohama. All his ideas are at the best inadequate; at the worst, purely monstrous. If these studies give any new picture of Japan, their aim will have been achieved. But let no one take this work as a guide-book to facts. It

## PREFACE

is a guide-book of impressions, devoted rather to accuracy of impression than to that soul-destroying form of inaccuracy which is known as fidelity to facts. My object has been to give true pictures rather than elaborate statistics. I have tried to render Japan as I saw it and felt it; not Japan as manuals and guide-books try to present it. I hope that any one who reads will recognise with grateful mercy the usefulness of my aim, and its heart-rending difficulty of achievement. I am bitterly conscious that others might have done my task better: I will only trust that some might have done it worse. For the toil of the painter in words is hard and tedious, his medium harsh and poor, his effect when treating of a country so fantastic as Japan entirely unsatisfying.

About words: let none forget that *g* when occurring in any Japanese word, has always the sound of *n* to accompany it, at least in Hondo. Thus, for *Tokugawa Shōgun*, *Tokungawa Shōngun*; *Inage* is *Inangé*. The *n* is sounded as in the German *finger*; also *u* is frequently elided. *Asakusa* is pronounced *Azaxa*; *Iyeyasu* and *Iyemitsu* are respectively *Yeyas* and *Yemits*. All vowels are of course sounded as in Italian, and the aim of the Japanese is to avoid any sharp accent on any syllable: *Kamakura*, *Matsushima* should have equal stress on all four syllables.

Finally, the word *Mikado* is never, never used in Japan. The Emperor is *Tenshi Sama*, the Son of Heaven; *Mikado* is an ancient designation which passed out of date in remote antiquity. His Imperial Majesty is never mentioned except as *Tenshi Sama* —a title which is even extended to cover European potentates.

With so much preface I will abandon my book humbly to the mercy of the many who have never seen Japan.

R. J. F.



# THE GARDEN OF ASIA

## I

### DAI NIPON BANZAI

**A**CROSS the waste of waters a mass of broken grey sketches itself dimly against the turbulent clouds. It is the wanderer's first sight of Japan—the Island of Goto, precipitous and craggy. As it fades into the greynesses behind, there rises far away the high and jagged coastline of Japan; and, after skirting islets and fantastic pinnacles of rock, the vessel glides under a wild sky of violet and flaming orange into the harbour of Nagasaki. The harbour of Nagasaki is a dream of loveliness, marred by the reality of coal and belching steamers wallowing in the polluted sea. High on three sides rise the steep green hills, clothed with flowering trees and thick plantations of graves. The mouth of the haven is peppered with islets, up whose pinnacles the pine goes climbing everywhere. In that glorious place the town is a plague-spot, a taint of leprosy upon

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the cheek of Helen. Squalid and foul it is, with all the hedonistic opportunities that the simple heart of the European sailor craves. Here is the home of Madame Chrysanthème, that most un-Japanese of Japanese. Nagasaki is an annexe of Portsmouth, set down at the entrance of Paradise.

From Nagasaki the coast is steep and rugged. The landscape has the inevitable charm of Japan. The pines seem to make a point of growing along the skyline, and the headlands are contorted and fretted into monstrous arches, pinnacles, and caverns. The air is clear and yet full of moisture. The country has the crystalline sharpness of outline that distinguishes the Riviera, without any of the Riviera's stern and harsh aridity of tone. Through the intense clarity of the Japanese atmosphere, colour strikes the eye with a rich and restrained purity, in which the blues and deep greens take a depth of beauty that they have nowhere else. In Japan one seems to be looking upon a transfigured landscape through a middle distance of perfectly calm, clear water, which gives each mass of azure or violet a redoubled opulence of soft colour. The Riviera has outline, but no atmosphere. There everything is drawn in the same plane, is vivid and glaring in its unmitigated acridity of light. But in Japan lines are softened and colours mellowed by the infinite varieties of atmosphere. At dawn the effect so familiar in all Japanese pictures becomes clearly recognisable. For in every

dell, fold of the hills, or low-lying valley, floats a very delicate film of mist, from which the outlines of the trees emerge gradually towards their tops, fixed in a ghost-like uniformity, where nothing of detail is seen, only a fairy shape, motionless, yet hardly consolidated out of the shadows against which it stands with such vague precision of unrelieved colouring. For this is not a mist after our western sense, that gives the name to a fat roll of white wadding, obliterating a whole landscape in the solid, thorough-going manner of a respectable Anglo-Saxon vapour. The Japanese mist is a very frail film, whose interposition mollifies details and purifies colour into the harmonised tenderness of its dominant note. Japanese atmosphere at sunrise is like a curtain in the theatre of dreams—it is airy, remote, incredible in its dainty unreality. Then gradually the curtain rolls up, and the trees, hills, and rivers spring to active existence, when they are no less beautiful than in the strange opalescent modulations of the dawn. Only one thing in air has such beauty in the West: and that is the blue vapour that etherealises London into a vision of Turner. But this is uniform in its scope, whereas the Japanese mist lightens from the earth so that each tree emerges very softly from invisibility into a graduated visibility that only reaches a doubtful completeness with the topmost branches, which stand clear indeed, but without jarring obtrusion of detail.

The Inland Sea is a subject for general rhapsody. Like most places on which the tourist lavishes his epithets, it is undeserving of them. One enters it through the narrow straits of Skimonoseki, whose woods are splashed in spring with the rose and white of cherries and almonds. One emerges into a vast sea dotted with arid little gravelly islands, sparsely covered with morbid little trees. The coast is equally nude, while its outline is less beautiful than almost any other in Japan. At Kobe we come again into the Pacific, and so up the outer coast towards Yokohama. The next morning the cosmopolite steward leads one to a porthole, and murmurs in hieratic tones : "There is Fuji—Holy Mountain, with snow upstairs." And there indeed, pale in the dawn, Fuji-yama towers up far above the land and the sea. He is ghostly and white, holding his magnificent pose with the lightness of a momentarily arrested phantom, whom the development of day must dissipate in the course of half an hour. The great White Mountain looks too beautiful to be permanent. It must float away in a moment into the wrack of night. It is so airy, so fantastic in its beautiful immobility, so unearthly in the clear perfection of its outline, that one feels it to belong more to the imagination of a God than to the reality of this workaday world. It is true that the glories of Fuji-san are spattered, and stained, and degraded by persistent streams of inept human patronage.

But that is his own desert. Not even the fattest witted of Anglo-German tourists could refrain from adoring his tremendous beauty in some fatuous phrase or other. And beauty does not cease to be beauty when it becomes obvious. Not even the trite coinage of a globe-trotter's praise can deprive the Holy One of his splendour, any more than roses lose their value by frequency, or diamonds their urbane glory from the too common wearing of too common women. So one cannot blame either tourists or Mountain for the fact that he is the keynote of all Japanese impressions; if he enslaves to his praise half the epithets in the dictionary, or causes the serious-minded to flog their brains for something to say of him that shall not be stale or hysterical in exaggeration of silliness. But to ask anyone who has been to Japan to refrain from adoration of Fuji-san is to demand the impossible. Pity, then, for those who are between the devil of impossibility on the one side and the deep sea of heart-breaking difficulty on the other. May their efforts inoffensively to discharge an offensive but inevitable duty be looked upon with mercy! The Holy Mountain has no right, being a thing of earth, and coming within our frail human scope, to be so unearthly, so inhuman in the triumphant supremacy of his beauty. No colours can fitly paint a God, but must without fail produce a dowdy caricature or a squalling kaleidoscope of garishness. Our language has

not the purity of tone to render faithfully the ghostly radiance of so divine a model.

Henceforth the coast is dominated by the Holy One. He soars up into the misty blue above the low purple line which we know to be the high mountains of the coast. A faint fume of mist lies round his base and lifts him higher into the untrammelled heavens. He seems to have no connection with the world below him. Clearly he is the guardian God of Japan, keeping watch and ward over the approaches to the Capital. One feels that worship is the obvious instinct, and has full sympathy with the crowds who yearly ascend the Mountain to adore his spirit at the shrine on the summit. In the days of his whiteness all approach is forbidden. It is only when the snows are little more than runnels upon his slopes that his priests declare the God to be at home. Previously he is supposed to be diplomatically absent, indisposed to receive his visitors. But with late summer he extends his welcome, and the pious troop devoutly up his cindery sides to the holy place. His aspect demands worship, far more cogently than the fear of his anger. It is for his height and his beauty that he is adored. But there are ominous signs that the giant is stirring now from his long sleep. He is not dead, but dormant. It is barely two hundred years since he last spoke, and filled Yeddo, eighty miles away, with soft ashes and the roar of inexorable thunders. Now once more he gives suspicion of

his mood. His heart is hotter year by year, and a tiny film of steam develops and increases in the crater. Evil tremors of the ground betray the awakening of the Holy One, and his neighbours are beginning to shift from his immediate proximity. Possibly the years may be few before the God awakes with a roar from his slumbers, and, raging up to heaven, makes of Tokio and Yokohama a new Pompeii and a new Herculaneum.

At last the ascent of the coast is finished, and rounding a long low bluff, clad with trees, and speckled with the pink brick houses without which no good European is happy, the vessel glides placidly across the golden water and comes to anchor in Yokohama Bay. Yokohama is a European town, built by Europeans for Europeans, and demanding no notice except for its ugliness and the insolence with which its dwellings pollute one of the most glorious prospects upon earth. The Bluff is a masterpiece of crime against the immortal Fuji-san. Yokohama is the business city. Here the consuls dispense money to the undeserving but needy, and the banks reproof to the needy but deserving. It is full of Orientalised Europeans. It is generally hateful, crammed with gaudy and inferior "curios," and dotted with notorious brothels. It is an excellent place to leave. With joy indeed do we depart hurriedly for Tokio.

## II

## THE METROPOLIS OF JAPAN

AFTER an hour, or a little more, the train ceases to rattle between the rice fields and sweeps into the Shimbashi station of Tokio. The station is on the European plan, bare and bald, with a mingled odour of grime and desolation. But outside goes roaring the full tide of Japanese life. Though, in this quarter, the houses are many of them built after Western models, and tramways run perilously round the corners, yet the whole tone is purely Japanese. The crowds, beneath their flapping felt hats and umbrellas, patter along upon wooden clogs, dressed in all the garments of old Japan. The streets are thick with people, men and women and children pervading the pavement. This quarter of Shimbashi has suffered more disastrously than almost any other from the official passion for Western methods. Whole streets have been rebuilt in squalid little frightful European houses. One main street of the quarter is built entirely of brick and stone. It is called by observers with an apt eye for simile "the Japanese Broadway." If this be a true comparison,

one can only pray that a kind Providence may continue to spare us from seeing the prototype. Its shops are foolish and terrible, offering for sale bowler-hats and shawls of magenta plush, edged with chenille balls, and uniforms and bicycles and phonographs and all the other glorious achievements by which we have vindicated our mastery of art. But the Ginza is only a very small fraction of Tokio, and even this becomes charming at night, when the pavement is lined with little open booths, each illuminated by a flaring lamp. Behind, the hideousness of the shop-fronts has been softened off by the deep blue shadows of the Japanese night, except where a chain of swinging lanterns hovers above some bazaar—a festoon of round and blazing rubies in the intenser darkness that surrounds them. By each booth squats its owner, offering his wares. And, if the shops of the Ginza be European, these stalls are of the most typical Japanese fascination. Every manner of attractive rubbish they display—old odds and ends, that are all things of beauty. Here one may buy an aureoled Amida in bronze, or a wonderfully cast cock and hen; there are pictures, and toys, and heavy tea-kettles of iron, moulded with shells or dragons, or fishes, that, on the rough surface of the vessel, look like incrustations formed by the ages in the depths of the sea; or cups and bowls in china or in lacquer; books, purses, pouches with knobs of carved ivory, and little sliding balls of

enamel: sweets and cakes and many-tailed gold fishes in globes; lanterns plain and lanterns painted; lanterns round and lanterns long—every conceivable object of one's affection can be found by night, in the Ginza.

Small wonder if a visitor's impression of Tokio be disorderly. One's first affliction is the enormous size of the city. It is bewilderingly vast, and rambles away over the mileage in a manner distractingly desultory to the orderly mind, which expects any properly constructed city to *be* a city—a serried congeries of houses tightly packed in rows, with occasionally a neat and well-defined parallelogram of open space occupied by grass, upon which one must not walk, and by trees beneath whose shade one is allowed to sit for a penny. But Tokio is a very leisurely city. Here and there are cobwebs of streets. But everywhere there are gardens, and gardens, and gardens: gardens large and gardens small, and gardens that are really parks, and great open tangles of vegetation. In the politer quarters every house has its domain, and some of them are of princely size. The streets through which a rickshaw carries one are not thronged with houses as at home. The buildings line the way decorously, not like a crowd at a royal procession, but in a leisurely manner suggesting no rush for occupation. They are all absolutely Japanese, these houses—open shops debouching upon the street, within whose cavernous depths of

darkness one may see the cool matted floors and the great round firebox of gnarled wood or beautifully wrought brass ; and, again, dimly beyond, the wares —the rolls of cotton, dashed with unerring designs in blue, the sober silks of a grown man's dress, and the flamboyant colours of a child's, or, perhaps, the accumulated worthlessness heaped up for the tourist's admiration. In front of every cavern hang blinds of blue cotton, and before every silkshop flapping bundles of the stuffs : dull blues and greens, then the tinsel of gold and silver for cushions ; next, glorious treasures of precious brocade for Obis, and, like huge posies, the scarlets, emeralds, azures, violets of the silk-crapes that are designed for children and very young geisha. And Japan is thronging round us the whole time—babies in orange and green and purple play about the streets, and (with due respect to the doting globe-trotter) howl with a vehement bitterness that could not be surpassed in the benighted West. Waiting-maids of the lower class, brown and blowzy, with flopping red cheeks, go lumpishly about their marketing ; coolies and workmen amble up and down in their tights and doublets of blue, figured with fantastic heraldries of white ; quiet gentlemen in greys and blacks shuffle upon their clogs ; and gracious pale ladies of quality are borne through the crowd by their whirling rickshaws. Save that the air is darkened with telegraph wires and that the men wear felt hats, here is nothing to remind the wanderer that there is

any such thing as England or Europe. The air is full of that sweet and subtle odour which one has long learned to associate with things imported from Japan. It has a delicious mustiness all its own, and comes from the dried wood of *Chimonanthus fragrans*. So we are carried swiftly up the broad streets crowded with life—there is no footway—and at dangerous corners the kurumaya howls dolefully to make the people avoid the path. One passes shops heaped high with china for common use, whose blues and whites make a picture of attraction, only less than that of the picture painted on each little cup and platter; fruit shops, where the half a hundred different forms of orange heaped and piled, gleam and glitter like a miser's paradise. Here are, too, apples and pale citrons, and, in their time, glowing hills of strawberries. Or, here and there, out of the scented darkness, gleams the white blossom of camellia or magnolia, gathered by the branch, and bound loosely into opulent sheaves: with heavy plumes of rose-white cherry, or spiteful angular bare stalks, jewelled with the crimson or silver of the plum: narcissus, also, and huge blushing peonies, and the sheen of willow-buds, and delicate glories of the unfolding iris. Sometimes the iris are in their natural colours—pale gentian-blue, or snowy, or imperial violet, but sometimes, alas! splashed and blotchy with mauve, looking like inferior blotting-paper worn out by inferior ink. But often the Japanese take the pure

white iris and dip its stem into some solution, with the result that the whole flower blushes most exquisitely in all its veins with sanguine rose. This morbid development of art is astonishingly rich and beautiful, and they that buy it feverishly for genuine, and order plants of it, are to be sincerely pitied on their disappointment.

Tokio fares very badly at the hands of the globe-trotter. As a rule he spends three weeks at Yokohama, with odd days at Nikko and Kioto; then he visits Tokio for the afternoon, and on the morrow returns to America, and writes his impressions of Japan. Staying in Yokohama for this end is much as if one took furnished lodgings at Balham with a view to collecting impressions of the Pyrenees. However, the world at home still obstinately knows nothing about Tokio. No one has ever rendered its charm in English. Its charm, indeed, is so great and imperious that it would require more than ordinary genius to convey a fair impression of this flowery, stinking, adorable city. It requires a prolonged acquaintance. To be its lover one must take a house and do nothing, neither teach, nor sight-see—most soul-destroying of occupations—nor study the language, nor meditate points of view. One must live quietly, absorbing all impressions that suggest themselves—second-hand impressions are as worthless as second-hand morality—moving in the life of the streets, jostling shoulder to shoulder with the citizens,

and noticing, noticing, without ever going out to see. For any purpose defeats itself. Thus in a little we become one with the current of existence, and, blending with the life, begin to have some vague idea of its meaning and its beauty. The true life to be led in Tokio would have been dear to King Charles the Second; for it is only in the course of persistent and aimless sauntering that the hard skin of the European consciousness can be soaked and permeated by the charm and the beauty in which his whole soul is steeped. Roaming endlessly, without object or hurry, drifting from shop to shop, from garden to garden, from tea-house to tea-house, it is only so that at last the Westerner begins to appreciate intelligently the loveliness of the Capital. Further, it is a city of moods: seen weeping in the November rains, or shuddering in the grip of February sleets, it is a place of horror. It is only with patience and full knowledge of the great golden nights and steamy days of summer that one comes to realise the unity of the whole impression, and recognises that the horror of one season and the glory of the other, intense as either is by itself, yet combine to produce the whole, which is part of the fascination of this most fascinating city of the East.

### III

## THE GARDENS OF TOKIO

SEARCHING for a Japanese home, one makes inquiries, naturally, for a garden. Attached to one house there was a little garden perhaps three yards square. It was not ambitious. It did not aspire to rivulets and bridges and paraphernalia. But it was perfect. There were little bushes of azalea, and primeval-looking mossy stones that had all the effect of rocks, and a peeping fern, and mother-of-thousands, and tufts of grass, and a tree of the lovely little *Camellia sasanqua*, with rose-pink blossoms like an enormous dog-rose. That garden, built up in its mossy court, was a pure joy to the eye, but the destined house of choice proved, after all, to be without a garden. To order one seemed the obvious course. Accordingly workmen came bearing plants with roots enveloped in a ball of matting. And they erected the garden. They built a pile of rock-work, and in precisely the right places they planted fern and grass and asarum. They made for it a background

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(N.B.—This and the following article are reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, where they appeared in March.)

of azalea and striped daphne, till the whole had the air of a rocky clearing in a jungle. Then they arranged a wilderness of daphne and camellia and azalea, and the thing was done. The domain also comprised originally two large magnolias, an elderly plum, a cherry, a pine, a cryptomeria, and a dyspeptic larch, while, at the New Year, a pair of large Christmas trees was planted in the road outside for luck, being the national Japanese charm. The soil of the garden was bare, but cloven by a series of stepping-stones, with whose aid one could take the air on one's territory in the cool of the morning on emerging from the bath.

Gradually an increasing familiarity with the language enables the domiciled Englishman to convey to his servants the fact that he wishes to see gardens. (Of course he possesses a comic servant. No English book about Japan would be complete without a comic servant and much facetious Pidgin-English. However, the thing has been so overdone that henceforth even those fortunate ones who have been blessed with comic servants must, in mercy to the world, conceal the fact. For, though the makers of books seem to ignore the fact, it is possible to have too much of even the best of things.) Accordingly the wanderer, having conveyed his wish to the servants, after many amusing misunderstandings, which originality forbids him to retail, is at last taken to various gardens. (The bland imbecility of the Japanese is

astonishingly provoking, although the highest compliment to the Englishman's supposed sagacity. And it might make the mildest saint peevish to be resolutely carted to the lowest tea-houses in the city, when he has directed his kurumaya, amid noddings of warm and intelligent assent, to take him to a garden.) A Japanese nursery garden is a revelation. There, on benches, in rows, sit tortured trees in their bowls or pans of faience. Their perfection is a marvel of patience, requiring years for its accomplishment. Sometimes one man will give as much as thirty years' attention to a single little cherry tree. Each curve, each leaf, each twig has its direction and proportion regulated by the most rigid and immemorial principles, and to have any value in Japanese eyes, a dwarf must conform absolutely to the iron rules laid down by the canons of taste in the days when Iyeyasu Tokugawa paralysed into an adamantine immobility the whole artistic and intellectual life of the country. The effect is of course exquisite in its elaborate and rather morbid beauty. But it must be said that there are many dwarfs—very many, who go for low prices, owing to the imperfections of their development. They have a bough or a bend that is not prescribed. Consequently the Japanese will buy them—indeed, with pleasure—but will not admit their claims to be works of art. Naturally he will buy them, as even so they are beautiful, and their price brings them

within range of everyone's ambition. So, at home, one might buy a Severn instead of a Turner, recognising the difference clearly, but valuing the cheaper picture as highly as it deserves, and buying it the more readily for its cheapness. However, these Japanese trees that fill the gardens are wonderful with all their imperfections, and the untutored savage eye of the West entirely fails to see any difference between a perfect specimen ten inches high, three centuries in age, and thirty pounds in price, and its neighbour of equal height, of five years' growth, and five shillings' value. They are all dainty. They are of every kind. There are cherries, plums crowded with blossom ; chimonanthus, kerria, magnolia, azalea, with gnarled and twisted trunks ; and, in their season, the right number of leaves in the ordained place, and a few flowers of the proper shape, borne precisely where they ought to be borne. These little trees, so different from the inferior specimens sent over here to charm inferior European taste, convey a feeling of perfect contentment. They are completely satisfying. One can see no fault in them anywhere. They give the eye rest from fault-finding. Consequently, in looking at them one has a strange sense of repose. Their impeccable curves give the same quality of the same soothing appreciation that one receives from the impeccable curves of a paragraph in Jane Austen. There is nothing either to add or to remove. So criticism can go to sleep, and the soul

have complete leisure for enjoyment, whereas, in all other pleasures of this diverse world, however keen they be, the faculty of criticism always remains alert and fatiguing. These trees are a lesson in satisfaction.

But the garden has many other things. Besides the long rows of benches upon which the trees are staged in their sizes—from three inches in height to three yards—there are many buildings whose paper shutters are slid back to reveal the cool matting, the alcove and picture of convention. All round each room are little pans containing gardens of different sizes. Here is a mossy precipice of enormous height, down whose face a waterfall foams, while, from its crannies, great gnarled trees peep timorously. All this in a pan six inches by eight. Or a stretch of park is shown in a tiny pot. Ancient twisted planes, with knotted boles, are dotted over its rise and fall. They are complete and venerable, rounded into the perfection of maturity. Or, through a gorge of terrific rocks, whose summits rise to heaven in fantastic pinnacles, the eye looks away into the stretches of distance, beneath a mighty bending *Thuja*, which casts its dense shadow over the gorge, towards a far-off prospect of the Holy *Fuji*, rising above the lower hills of his pedestal. This garden is somewhat larger; it is at least two feet by one, and the cone of *Fuji* is of white, glazed earthenware. Or perhaps a mossy stone upon a sandy bed mimics a famous mountain seen from a river's margin; or a

knot of trees, a pathless forest. In every case it is the incredible perfection of long-meditated proportion that gives the unerring effect of immensity. Not all gardens are so elaborate. Some merely contain a clump of *Adonis amurensis*, or a wet green rock of quaint shape, from whose cranny springs a tuft of grass; or, possibly, even a mere bare stone of some coveted shape. For the Japanese canon attaches a vast importance to stones and their shapes, so that often a common pebble, indistinguishable to the untaught eye from millions of its cousins, is painfully sought, and purchased for even more than a hundred pounds, while the garden that cannot find the precise configuration of stone to suit its scheme must remain incomplete for years, until much search has discovered the rock, and much money purchased it. One river in especial is famous for these precious stones.

The toy gardens are generally, like the larger ones, imitations of some famous landscape. But almost invariably the stone is there. And the creator's instinct for proportion does the work. There are three wee, pink plum trees, pollarded and covered with rosy blossom; there is also a clump of bamboo an inch in height, and a tiny golden bud of *Adonis amurensis*. These grow on a promontory that ends in a titanic rock, on the very shore of the sounding sea. And, indeed, so marvellously are these things placed and fitted, that it would be hard, were there

no disturbing surroundings, not to take this garden for what it represents. Looking into it one seems to be indeed gazing through a wild and rosy jungle down to the headland and the roaring surf. One false touch would set the whole conception ajar. But the Japanese never are guilty of that false touch.

In spring the garden outside is filled with lovely things. Along the curves of the pond are iris. Huge peonies flare from their pots, and all the dwarfed flowering-shrubs are balls of blossom a foot or less in height. But the Japanese is not the lover of flowers in general that ecstatic British ignorance imagines. A flower, to be admitted by Japanese canons, must conform to certain rigid rules. No flower that fails to do so can be recognised. At the head of rejected blossoms stand the rose and the lily, both of whom are considered by the Japanese rather crude, unrefined efforts of nature. Many others, of no less beauty, fall under this condemnation. The elect are cherry, wistaria, peony, willow-flower, iris, magnolia, azalea, lotus, peach, plum, and morning-glory. There are others, of course, but this is the hierarchy. And for his favourites, no attention is too onerous. Indeed, the Japanese have their reward, as anyone will own who has seen a nursery garden in the spring with its passionate wealth of colour set off by the bare brown earth, the paths of rough stone, and the pond, composed perhaps of snow-white pebbles.

## IV

### THE GREATER GARDENS

NOW all Japanese gardens, as Aristotle says of all arts, are a mimesis. They aim at a reproduction of some corner of nature, some aspect of nature. The Japanese is not a lover of flowers and of gardening in themselves, so much as for the effect of a combination. He is of no use as a practical gardener for growing normal plants in their normal health. He brutalises them, ignores their wishes, and harries them to death. On the other hand, he is unsurpassable when it comes to distorting, torturing, and tweaking into fantastic byways the plain courses of nature. It is not the plant he loves. It is the effect that the plant enables him to attain. He touches the highest point of artificiality. But he must never be called a good gardener. The true gardener cares far less for the freakish or abnormal possibilities of a plant than for the plant itself, as an individual, requiring the closest attention, and brilliantly rewarding a loyal devotion. A true gardener is the humble slave of nature; a Japanese her contemptuous tyrant. Accordingly, the Japanese garden

is a paradise of stones rather than of blossom. If a flower happens to come, well and good ; but its bush was not put there to blossom so much as to set off the contrast between two lines of rock. For, when a garden is not ambitious enough or willing to mimic a landscape, it becomes a rock-garden, pure and simple, though very different from the careful cosseting-ground for ill-tempered little Alpine plants that we mean by the name. A good Japanese garden of the ordinary sort is one where the rocks are of perfect size, shape, and disposition. They are relieved by round clipped bushes, which are liable to flower. But their prime test is the proportion of the whole, and the arrangement of the rocks in their prescribed order.

The Iwasaki garden is one comparatively modern, but, to a European eye, perfectly beautiful. It covers much ground and is attached to a large red brick house, in the raw style of Surrey. A lake wanders away into all manner of angles, and a path winds about it, over prepared rough bridges, and wave-lapped shingle, and artful ledges of rock. In one recess the visitor looks up the water to a series of green dunes, dotted with dwarfed pines, above which rises the cone of Fuji. Round another corner the wavelets ripple on to an archipelago of pine-clad islets, mimicking the famous islands of Matsushima, off the coast, by Sendai. Thence one wanders through jungles, and again out into a miniature rice-

field, and beds of iris. Then round the lake once more, and over a thick boscage of azalea, above which stands a Japanese dwelling-house of the owner's—his refuge, one supposes, when wearied of his red-brick palace. The water has countless other beautiful bays and inlets, fringed with cunning arrangements of rock and pebble, or bordered by reed and rushes. The whole effect is of inexhaustible charm. But it must be noticed that flowers, here, have no official existence. The flowers that the Japanese loves have a bed apart, they are not introduced into the scheme of decoration, as we should introduce them in England. Such a course would be contrary to all Japanese theories. Azaleas, indeed, occur in profusion, but they are there as shrubs. The aim and the value of this garden are its perfect proportions, and its faultless effects. The object of a Japanese garden is not to be a paradise of flowers, but a reproduction of landscape.

The Matsu-ura garden is one of the oldest, the most valued and admired in Japan. It is of immense age, and of the most prized associations. It is the Holland Park of Tokio. It is small, and of rather gloomy aspect. One looks from a parapet of stone out over a little square pond. On one side is a lovely trellis of wistaria, on another a headland, grey with rock and scarlet with azalea. At the far end are a dell and a jungle in deep shadow, and a rocky walk. And, finally, a grove of tea. For this garden is the

Eleusis of the famous tea-mysteries, which probably no European ever has seen, or ever will see genuinely performed. Here is the immemorial tea-house, where half the illustrious names of Japan have congregated. It has its prescribed ritual of the most appalling rigidity, this tea-ceremony, invented and elaborated by a pious monk, to distract from his debaucheries a young and giddy Shogun. It was taken up as a political weapon by the House of Tokugawa, and crystallised into its present adamantine form. For it was a social engine of the most powerful nature, bringing all the nobles together. Here, then, is one of its temples, within which the rites are celebrated, in due ordinance, with their prescribed compliments, obeisances and admiring exclamations over the prescribed flower, arranged in the prescribed spot, and indicated by the host in the prescribed words, to be followed by the invariable litany of conversation and courtesy over the cups of tea to be made, handed, accepted, and drunk, all with remarks and gestures and smiles of ancestral rubric. One sees, outside the Matsu-ura tea-house, a row of stepping-stones, finishing beneath a little *ail de baruf* in the wall above. By this the visitors had to enter—ignoring the thoroughly practicable door. They approached, making the due bows upon each stone, and at last their host was to fish them in through the window. The Matsu-ura garden is, of course, a masterpiece of beauty and construction, and further acquaintance

only deepens one's sense of its ripe and satisfying charm. Its pool is full of ducks, and cranes stalk in the alleys beneath the wistaria. No garden wins more respect from the Japanese than this. It is an honour to see it, and a delight to remember it.

Hardly more likely is the wanderer to see the Koraku-en or Arsenal garden. It has this name, being now enclosed within the domain of the hideous arsenal, whose peirastic explosions periodically shatter the silence of the glades. Once it was the pleasaunce of the great princes of Mito, who, belonging to the House of Tokugawa, succeeded to the throne of the Shogunate, only two lives before its final subversion. The property was then seized into the hands of the Emperor. Its extent is not great, but seems enormous. There is a little lake, framed in woodland, with a wonderful high jutting headland of the most exquisite effect and proportions, especially as seen from between the pine-trunks of a certain rocky nook on the further side. Then the path leads past a grotto and up into the dense gloom of a forest. Thence over, past a little shrine into the close darkness of a bamboo jungle, from which it emerges into a pleasant valley of grass, where Hori-kiri is imitated on a smaller scale by blossoming beds of iris. Behind rises a long perspective of high green hills diversified with forests. There is an orchard for cherry blossoms, and a trellis for the streamers of wistaria. So the path winds through a dozen land-

scapes and back at last to the lake and a new aspect of the splendid promontory, with its trees, its bushes, its rocks arranged exactly as the heart desires, so that one rests before it abashed in one's blissful inability to find any fault anywhere, even in the misplacement of a single twig. There are certain views in this Mito garden which surpass for beauty anything that mortal could imagine, little corners and flashes of loveliness that burn themselves into one's memory with the vivid permanence of a photograph. It is unforgettable. It is almost incredible—a masterpiece of conception and execution. A fresh jewel meets the eye at every turn or glance. Indeed, the Mito garden is a strip of paradise.

Rich as the Mito garden is in flowers, certain temples make a speciality. At Kameido there is a wandering lake, whose shores are framed and crossed by arcades upon arcades of wistaria, whose violet plumes are the adoration of Tokio in their season. Thither the whole town crowds, and the precinct is full of booths, where one can buy the daintiest of tiny cups, or tortoises, or buns, or any of the things that lend delight to a holiday. Standing on the lucky round bridges one sees a world of blossom: wistaria in trailers of lilac mist sweeping from the sky, and a delicate cloud-wreath of wistaria rising softly from the dark and silent water, in which the descending streams of coloured vapour are mirrored. All round under the shades

of the flowery trellis people sit in the cool to eat and drink and watch the blossoms and the water. The world seems to melt in the quivering heat into a violet haze.

Hori-kiri is no temple, except of iris. There we enter, and being conducted by a tiny Elder Sister to one of the innumerable little summer-houses, are presented with a cup of tea, a fan, and three or four iris buds rolled up in paper. All around are the flowers. The gardens occupy a long, narrow strip of ground, and down this valley goes foaming under the brilliant sky a torrent of unimaginable colour. The iris are of every kind, shape, and tint—single, loose, or double; stiff, flopping, erect; simple, spotted, striped, barred, or splashed; violet, blue, mauve, lilac, white, or wine-red; veined with blue, with purple, with crimson—great gorgeous blossoms of a foot's diameter, borne in a harvest so dense that little of their crowded green is visible. The shores of this colour-tide are dotted with little shelters, where one sits and meditates and wonders over the goodness of things, and finally, if inspired, writes a poem of appreciation, which one pins to a pillar of the summer-house. Then we retire filled and satiated with gorgeousness, realising in what manner it is that the Japanese love their blossoms. Hori-kiri is a miracle. It teaches us that we have never known what colour is under the chilly glooms of the West.

## V

## HOUSEKEEPING

THE most glorious intentions are liable to fade and pass like the roseate hues of early dawn. Our resolve was firm and noble to exclude from these Japanese pictures any mention of the Comic Servant. The self-sacrifice was great. But now it is borne in upon us that any record of our experiences would be incomplete without a study of Wataguchi, the much-enduring, his family and his career.

It was on a dreary day of dripping eaves in late November that the house was sought, and after many abortive efforts, found. The chosen abode lay in Akasaka : it was a wide house by Japanese ideas, standing in its own grounds of some twenty yards square extent. There were in it dining-room and drawing-room opening on to a verandah, beyond which lay the garden. There was also a spare bedroom, where it was gleefully suggested by the guide, (pernicious creature,) that one could, at pleasure, maintain a Japanese wife remote from the prying eyes of virtue. Along the passages lay the servants'

quarters, and through the kitchen, the bath-room. Then from the verandah a stairway, like that of a hen-house, clambered dizzily up to the superior storey, composed of one large room, designed for the master's use. From this apartment was obtained a fine view over the quarter, and beneath its casement lay the yard, where the servants transacted many curious businesses.

The guide, whose name, being interpreted, was Stone-Hat—had it been Brazen-front, the title would have been more apt—having discovered the house and fattened himself with the commission on its rent, engaged immediately to find domestics. Accordingly, the next day saw the mansion occupied by the smiles of a minute and wizened personage in snuff-coloured European clothes. He was more pitiful, more like a drowned rat than anything else imaginable. There was something tragic about his shrunken and diminutive air, about the wrinkled persistency of cheerfulness upon his little elderly face. This was Wataguchi, our destined "boy," being a venerable gentleman of some sixty years, the bearer of hereditary crests and honours. He greeted us with ebullient joy and affection, and assumed his place in the household with promptitude, even to the extent of confuting the importunities of the guide, whose conversation resembled that of the horse-leech's daughters in its range. Following on Wataguchi appeared the cook—aged sixteen, and of the

stronger sex—but an artist of commendable talent: and a kurumaya, whose dwelling-place was to be a small dog-kennel hard by the main gate.

No sooner had the house been fairly settled and its lessee debarrassed of the guide, than all the servants blossomed forth into their own national costume. In his ample draperies of blue and grey, Wataguchi became a figure of commanding dignity and gracious proportions. He treated us with a serene and patient kindness, such as is accorded to petulant children in their unreasonable moments, and before the majesty of our wrath he would stand laughing sweetly, with the most indulgent air of amusement. He had a genial manner of announcing an important visitor perhaps three weeks after the said visitor had come and gone, by which time Wataguchi had also succeeded in entirely forgetting the man's name, and the momentous message that he had left. When these proceedings roused our spleen, Wataguchi would face the efforts of our indignation with the happiest of smiles, regarding the whole affair, and especially our irritation, as a perfect triumph of quiet humour.

The tender feeling of the Japanese for their relatives is so notorious as to need no comment, and therefore the householder should not have been surprised when his three servants invited their entire families to live in his house. Wataguchi himself indulged in a wife, a young brother of very superior education, a young sister, several aunts, and an

occasional grandmother. The cook was content with a wife, a baby, and a niece. The kurumaya sheltered in his dog-kennel the lovely partner of his affection, the squalling pledge of that affection, and a few unclaimed babies to join the chorus. As the domestics fed themselves, the arrangement had few inconveniences. The most important of these was their habit of introducing one to their relatives at the most eccentric hours. The principal offender was Wataguchi. Foiled in his well-meant effort to become his employer's brother-in-law, he ceased at last to suggest his young sister as a suitable bride, and fell back upon the other members of his clan. In the weary evening he would enter, with a withered smile, announcing, "I introduce young brother." On his heels comes a respectable Japanese, of elaborate manners, and amiable, but limited conversation. Thinking that departure would be an impoliteness, he remains for two hours, ringing the changes on his half a dozen English sentences. At last he presents a sword or dagger, and takes his leave amid a flying cloud of courtesies. The next night Wataguchi would declare, "I bring grandmother," to return promptly in charge of an ancient crone, three feet in height and three yards in girth. This courtly person would double herself up with politeness, and take long, reverent sips of her breath, being entirely innocent of English. An awkward five minutes supervenes, after which she is removed from her

entertainer's mumbled and imperfect compliments. Nightly the whole gathering of the servants assembles in Wataguchi's room. And, through the sliding partitions of drawing-room and passage, penetrates the muffled hum of their voices. One night their entertainment takes the form of prayer: the following evening they read novels aloud, in a monotonous murmur, punctuated by bursts of laughter. Meanwhile a baby howls exhaustively, till the exasperated employer demands its instant silence. Thereupon Wataguchi, from the doorstep, lifts up his voice towards the dog-kennel, "The Master has the Condescension to request that the Honourable Baby deign augustly to refrain from making his respectable Noise." Ensues a sound of strangulation, beneath which the baby subsides into silence.

Of the financial methods of Japanese servants much has already been said. Totally ignorant of English writing, printed or manuscript, Wataguchi had the monthly bills compiled by the grocer to whom they were due. In time they made their appearance, most neatly inscribed in the neatest of books, but susceptible of no explanation whatever. Occasionally their exorbitance prompted their victim to a despairing effort of revolt. Penniless and agonised, he would send for Wataguchi, and announce his intention of examining each item in the account. With beaming smiles Wataguchi greets this an-

nouncement; goes out, and in an hour or so re-enters with a document of seven or eight yards' length. The master quite understands now that the account reaches thirty pounds for the month. He demands the reading. Wataguchi begins blithely. "Coals, half a farthings; charcoal, two farthings; breads, seven farthings; cloths, fifteen farthings; coals, three farthings; fishes, two farthings; breads, eight farthings; oil, thirteen farthings; coals, two——" At this point all sanity deserts the victim; with head propped on despairing hands, he faces with terror the vista of farthings that are to make up thirty pounds. He curses his spurt of economy, and waves away the remaining acreage of the bill, preferring bankruptcy with peace, to the stalled ox of plenty and lunacy therewith.

When a departure for Korea was mooted, Wataguchi proclaimed his intimate acquaintance with that unattractive country and its language. If he accompanied his master, he would so manipulate the Koreans in their own tongue that his master would, according to his comprehensive formula, "No money lose." This delicious prospect inspired us to claim his attendance. Accordingly he bade his wife good-bye and appeared at the station, shrunken and withered, in black coat and knickerbockers, beneath which his poor little legs, gaudy in coral-pink stockings, had the air of the frailest rocket-sticks. His luggage occupied a small bundle. The first difficulty occurred

at Kobe, where innocence combined with economy prompted his master to buy for Wataguchi the cheapest of possible tickets. Shortly afterwards Wataguchi appeared before the assembled company in the cabin, and, extending his ticket in a little claw that flickered with wrath, exclaimed, in pitiable accents of wizened indignation, his opinion that he should "more plenty better go back Tokio. This no can fix. All same dog-sleep." Overcome with shame and horror, his master showered forth banknotes like leaves, and for a while the situation was saved. But on arrival in Korea it was discovered that Wataguchi's intimate acquaintance with the Korean language was an interesting and pleasing fiction of his own brain. When asked to grapple with Korean stupidity, his one resource was anger and physical chastisement. On the platform of Chemulpo he stood among the white-clad, silly porters, gesticulating with rage like a peevish monkey. He was in charge of the lady's maid, a high and stately spinster of French extraction, whose name was Béatrice, and whose disposition a dignified acidity. By the side of furious wee Wataguchi towered up into the clear air that portentous and solid figure, with the air of a living monument, and eyes full of contemptuous indifference towards this ridiculous world and its ephemeral complications. She looked at the stolid porters, at her diminutive protector, at the rolling landscape, with the same cold and disdainful apathy.

Under the lee of her defender, Béatrice had the aspect of a vast warship in charge of an infinitesimal tug. It was a living picture of Turner's "Fighting Temeraire." Meanwhile the screeches of Wataguchi made no impression upon the immovable Koreans, who eyed him with the gross stupidity of cows. At last he determined to administer a sharp lesson. Clambering upon one of the deserted portmanteaux, he stood on tiptoe, and, with outstretched arm, boxed all the Korean ears within reach. This method, being fully within Korean intelligence, had the desired effect, and Béatrice, with the luggage, was safely lodged in the train. Arrived at Saoul, the wanderers found themselves seeking admittance to a dingy hotel, whose sole inmate appeared to be a Korean of even phenomenal dulness. Failing in all our attempts to obtain anything—even a reply—we called Wataguchi to our aid. Here was an opportunity for display of that classical Korean in whose use he was so fully versed. He marched forward, approached the quailing native, seized him by the highest attainable fold of his wrapper, shook him violently, and adjured him in a stentorian yelp, "You fetch speak-English boy."

Some days having elapsed, Wataguchi, though very precious, was decided by his master (who had to pay for him; against the clamours of all the friends who had not to do so) to be an unnecessary and ommissible expense. Accordingly he was given

money and told to return to Japan. His joy was great. He prepared promptly to follow instructions. He made us all a tender and temporary farewell. Then, through the glass door of the hotel, we saw him backing away into the main square of Saoul. Suddenly his face broke into out wizened smiles. It blossomed with affection like the rose. He waved his arms passionately, and seemed to kiss his finger-tips in adoration. We were astounded at this amorous vision. And then we discovered that on an upper balcony stood Béatrice, at whom her defender was waving a sweet farewell. Her answer we never knew, but it must have been of some kindness to warrant so warm a display below. In what unlikely places blooms fair romance! Had his charms softened that adamantine bosom? Was Wataguchi tortured by a hopeless flame for that enormous handmaid? No doubt he thought her a fine figure of a woman. Indeed she was—quite three times his size. So, possibly, his heart ached with a lonely love; or, possibly his Juliet dropped him from her balcony some little smile of consolation. And, alas! for Madame Wataguchi waiting at home in patient virtue. Here was told again the old story of Kalypso and Penelope.

When, a month later, we returned to find Tokio embedded in the cherry-blossom, we found also Wataguchi, restored and radiant as the flowers. He received us with stretching smiles of ecstatic affection.

For us he killed the fatted calf, and so aroused the enthusiasm of the cook that our first dinner on our return was a thing to remember long. In especial, there was a fricassée of chicken, of a succulent delicacy inimitable. The next morning, in overhauling the restored delights of our home, we missed the little bob-tailed black-and-white kitten, with whom we had the habit of beguiling the hours. Demanding it of Wataguchi, we had the smiling answer: "Neko is it? Last night, master, he eat Neko!" Woe, woe, for the fatted calf, and the sacrificial fricassée of kitten!

## VI

## INAGE : A SKETCH FROM JAPAN

A N hour of placid travelling carries one many centuries away from the roar of Tokio into the quiet places near the sea where, long ago, the gods were born. Across an upland plain, where the corn-fields shimmer under the winds, a rough track leads over towards the pine-belt that fringes the shore and binds into solid ground the shifting sands of the ages. Entering the forest, a dark silence falls upon the wanderer. His footsteps die on the soundless sand. A vast and immortal calm possesses the woodland. Creation seems to be at pause. The soft dusk seems the twilight of chaos. Where all earthly utterance is hushed, eternal presences brood in the gloaming of the pines. The place is a cathedral of pregnant silences and formless sanctities. The stillness of this peace is very full of wonder.

Suddenly, in a fold of the glen, beyond which laps the sea, pale and spectral, lies before us the long low mass of a great Japanese inn. For to this peaceful place the dwellers of Tokio come flocking in summer

time for rest. Now, in early spring, it is empty, for its many patrons are gone instead to Mukojima to see the cherries in blossom. But the wanderer is hailed with enthusiasm and induced to his ease in one of the sweet matted rooms. There he sleeps out the night, wrapped in quilts, until the young acerbity of the dawn arouses him to pull back his windows for greeting to the risen sun. From the wooden balcony the visitor gazes out over a sea multicoloured as a blue opal and restful in its holy peace as the phantasmal lake of Avalon. Far, very far away across the bay, lies a foaming ruffle of misty violet, which is the hill-country of Hakone and Miyanoshita, high and rugged. Above, the vaporous blue of the sky hardens upward to the azure of the zenith. And against it, august, incomprehensible in its glory of unearthly splendour, stands out the Great White Ghost of Japan: the flawless line of Fuji-yama, white from crown to base, with a dazzling glory of purity in the dawn, that shames our English conception of snow as seen under the pearly glooms of the West. From Inage Fuji-san is distant not less than ninety miles. He towers far up into the blue, wearing every inch of his thirteen thousand feet with a confidence and a majesty of stateliness that his rivals of Europe seek in vain to imitate. Seen by sunrise, across the shifting gleams of Tokio Bay, the Holy One seems a thing detached from earth, a remote divine phantom, floating for a happy instant among the glamours of the morning,

but having no reality in the turmoil of mortal uglinesses. He is a vision from an earlier world, awful in his cold purity, his phantasmal splendour, his ethereal remoteness from the world of creation. And yet, again, he has the eternal magnificence of a thing divine. He fronts the dawn as he has fronted the ages, serene in the impregnable glory of his dominion. Against the sky his robe is dazzling, pure, and without spot. His curves show firm in their unchanging perfection. His presence is full of might and radiance. He is king over all the broad lands at his foot. He is altogether holy and supreme.

Beyond Inage the sea beats inwards towards Tokio in a vast curve, so that, though the Holy One is opposite, it is only very far away to the right, indistinguishable in the haze of dawn and distance, that a fungus of smoke against the clear sky betrays the presence of the capital. The wanderer wends at last into the woodland, passing by the quiet gardens of the inn, its scattered summer-houses upon the dunes, and its broad pool filled with carp of hoary antiquity. In the morning the quality of the silence that holds the pine woods is changed. Now it is more tense, more keen. The note of the pines has changed from the dim whisper of calm to the eager intensity of expectation. Their voice has a livelier thrill : it moves in a higher, more youthful key. And, beneath, the soft sand is as dead and silent to the footfall as if the mortal that walked there were no more indeed than

the phantom for which the pine trees know him. Here man moves like the unreal ghost he is. And through the matting trunks of the trees as they rise and bow over the declivities of the dunes, bright flashes of blue sea strike passionately through the greys and sober greens like wine flickering through the jungle of a philosopher's thoughts. And so one passes down a narrow gulch upon the broad shore where the sea has left its treasures in trust for its return. Here are discarded fragments of civilisation, heaped and piled — broken cups and bowls and platters, all the refuse of Tokio thirty miles across the water. And here, too, are the discarded treasures of the sea — great twisted shells, monstrous in size and shape, horned, voluted, obscene; spider-like in an immobility of intricate ugliness; or smooth and broad, blending the tints of mist and pearl and amethyst; or again, gigantic ears of Queen Venus, glittering with the indomitable ferocity of opals.

Climbing the brown and crumbling cliff, the wanderer finds himself in a boscage of the pines, where sand has made way for soil. Here the ground is thick with the bunched stars of a wee blue gentian, and here bright purple daisies stand stiffly, and along the earth lie scattered the intense and glowing rubies of the creeping pyrus. Following this track through the wood, the growth of pine becomes smaller and more copse-like, until at last it terminates at the very top of the cliff in a series of sunwarmed hollows filled

with coarse long grass. Here one can lie full length in the warm glare and listen to the bitter winds that whistle overhead, bearing over the sea to earth the sharp message of spring. Scattered among these hollow places under the sun are bushes of the great wild camellia. Dark with their bulk of dull, leathern leaves, their mass is starred brilliantly with the pulsating rose of the great vivid blossoms—those blossoms which the Japanese ban as unlucky, for the habit their glowing crowns possess of falling away suddenly. After lying sunned and at peace, the wanderer rises from his sleepy hollow to pick nodding boughs and bunches of that beautiful flower of death, whose brilliance takes from the sunlight such a power of radiance as to seem almost resplendent of itself. Then, from his inn, again, the rickshaw carries him over the soundless sand out on to the muddy track once more. So he is borne over the waving uplands towards the railway. Suddenly, as he goes, a shock-headed boy of fifteen leaps on to the road and holds out imploring hands. He runs along by the rickshaw's side, still with gestures of entreaty. He pleads with his eyes, and unintelligible words proclaim his wishes. But the wanderer sits bolt upright, and, remembering the golden rule that to succour beggars is to foster intemperance, hugs himself upon his virtuous denial and passes righteously upon his way. To the right-minded *la générosité est interdite* as much as ever *la mendicité* to the destitute.

So the wanderer regards the horizon stonily, and takes no heed. Then, at last, an idea flashes across him. There are no public-houses here. Can that beggar have had another idea than money? The wanderer looks back. Upon the wind-swept road the boy stands still. And by the wayside lies a little Village of Peace. Under a tormented tree, whose boughs bend to the gales, lie very peacefully the bodies of those humble ones whose souls have long fared forth upon the further pilgrimages. A small congregation of clustered tombstones marks the holy place, and on the tombs of the bodies are flowers laid for tribute to the glorified souls. It was in offering to some dear thing dead that the boy had desired even one of our glowing flowers of death. And the gift would have brought us merit. But we denied him. So, at last, we recognise the truth of his entreaties. But our comprehension comes too late. The world's comprehension rarely comes in time. Now it is too late for us to turn back and give pleasure to that soul by offering our share of honour to another. The boy sinks wistfully back in the dusk, while the wind wails in our ears with a derisive bitterness across the ghostly movements of the upland. The glory of day fades into the bitter cold of night. And in our hands the glow of the death-flowers, too, has faded like a phantom. They are all bruised, and their crimson crowns are fallen into the dust. Their

## **INAGE: A SKETCH FROM JAPAN 45**

death has been useless. And still, against the dull glare of sunset, that dark figure watches tragically, unable to understand our hardness of heart. So the day dies over Inage.

## VII

### SHOPS AND SHOPPING

HALF the delight of life in Tokio lies in the fascination of shopping. If one takes a house up in the Akasaka quarter, there lie round one's abode winding streets, whose shops are little rusty repositories for the quaintest of objects. For, after the first rapturous plunge into Japanese life, one comes to ignore the commoner shops, where china is sold, or fruit or flowers; and to concentrate one's attention on the small and dingy caverns where lurk worthless pieces of beauty, the refuse of everyday existence. These shop-fronts have small promise. A set of cracked porcelain jostles with a family of wooden bowls, an iron kettle or two, several dirty-looking pictures, stacked in a pile of rolls, a pair of glaring deal chests of drawers, and a gilded mirror or so. But even these little grimy places have their charms and offer their prizes. One may pick up delicious things from time to time: a tea-set of white porcelain, jewelled with peacocks in gold and emerald, whose daintiness of grace is the bitter peevishness of one's acquaintance, or a cheap pic-

ture, whose design is a marvel of audacity and vigour.

But these are not the shops for genuine treasures. For such one must walk down towards the Moat. Here and there along the highway are dotted little dens of darkness, where may be found wonders. Methods of shopping are here of a leisureliness unparalleled. Explorers from the vivid West are counselled to take with them a friend of accommodating temper, with whose conversation they may beguile the lengthy hours of Japanese procedure. Arriving before some such shop, we see an obvious selection of its wares exposed. There are bronzes, and pictures, and china, and rags of brocade. There are ranks of sword-guards, and strutting peacocks with enamelled crests and tails. But all these things are vain and unprofitable to anyone who really wishes to purchase with intelligence. He must bow politely, remove his shoes, and enter the shop. And so, upstairs into the inner upper room, where, by the fire-box, he stretches himself upon the floor. Then, from cupboards and remote recesses, begins the slow procession of treasures. And here comes in the true value of a friend. For the shopman gives his inferior wares precedence over his better. And much time is spent in testing of the purchaser's taste. Meanwhile the two Europeans beguile the hours in talk, and superciliously wave away the undesirable,—the heavy lacquer, the distorted bronze,

the obviously forged pictures bearing famous names. But at last some cup or jar emerges from its seclusion and its little boxes and bags of brocade. Then the drums beat to battle. A price is asked, a price is offered. The price asked is double what the showman will take: the price offered is half of what the purchaser, being wise, will give. Much genial courtesy, bowings, smiles, and compliments accompany the first half of the negotiations. But, when both parties have reached the limit of their concessions, then begins a stern war upon the debated ground. Every device is employed: wails, protests, anger, contempt, denial on the part of the vendor: derision, pleadings, compliments, propitiatory cigarettes, and feigned departures on that of the purchaser. At last each yields a further point, with elaborate sighings, and the smiles of an exaggerated and over-altruistic courtesy. We are nearer the end by two points. The battle is renewed, with fresh vigour, to arrive at the same conclusion. Finally, one stretches and the other retracts his price until a common figure is reached. Then sweet peace once more prevails: the vendor assumes an air of ruinous but genial generosity; the purchaser the air of one who has spent his last penny for the benefit of another, and is flushed with the joy of his own excellence. We rise, descend into the lower shop, and resume our shoes. So, amid many bows and cheerful farewells, we depart, bearing our treasures.

The number of such shops in Tokio—genuine Japanese shops, catering for no garish European tastes—is incredible. They swarm along the streets, and each is a greater joy than the last. There is one in a narrow, darkened alley in Akasaka whose tiny daintiness is a perpetual delight as one drives past. It is full of wee treasures, and an air of delicacy pervades it. In the matted inner room sits a beautiful, aged man, with the air, the bearded dignity of a sanctified sage. Reluctantly, and with no desire to sell, he produces for us small gems of Chinese cups and bottles—wonderfully glazed and enamelled with jewels of colour—or green saucers of jade, or the refinements of some Japanese toy in bronze. Everything on his shelves has an air of meticulous cleanliness that suits with its dainty elegancies of contrivance. So, without any enthusiasm, the old prophet sits among his treasures, dreading the necessity of selling any. He remains immovable in the matter of price. He does not want you to buy his darlings and carry them away. But, if you really desire them, well, you can take them at his valuation, or leave them. And he would prefer this latter alternative. However, the purchase once completed, he follows David's sensible example after his baby's death, and becomes cheerful in face of the irremediable. He goes into another room, leaving us with the cakes and tea that he has ordered for our entertainment, and returns in a moment with some little fragile, charming present of

courtesy—some little carving in wood, or kettle in coloured faience. So he bows us out and returns to his meditations in the fragrant dusk of his cavern.

Down in Nihombashi is a tiny shop devoted to pictures. There officiate an ancient man, a smiling maiden, and a venerable crone. The interior of the shop is seen piled and stocked with roll after roll of pictures, within whose tight cylinders lurk possibilities of the most marvellous works of art. In front are a few pictures unrolled and hanging, with a litter of prints and oddments in every kind. The crone grins a toothless smile of appreciation at our rummaging enthusiasm, and, in answer to our request to see specimens of certain old masters, the man bows with assent, and the maiden shambles off into the darkness, selecting the required object with unerring certainty, among the stacks of pictures. With this she returns ; it is untied, criticised, condemned, and rejected. Others follow on the same way. But occasionally some clearly beautiful and desirable possession is marked, courteously but desperately fought for, and, finally, purchased. A series of rough drawings is produced, wherein mice, hens, fishes, are rendered in a couple of strokes and a dash, with the most marvellously successful audacity of fidelity. They are the works of a great master : yet, though they are originals, their price is, for some reason, quite agreeably modest. Prints, too, are bought, and a rare little book by Hokusai, containing the most

exquisite of coloured landscapes. Then we ask to see anything they may have of Kyosai, the famous and Bohemian painter who died not many years ago. They say they have only one work of his. We ask to see it. There is a trifling hesitation. Then the roll is fetched. "Show it us," we cry. Again there is a perceptible awkwardness. Then the old man speaks, excusing his reluctance in reluctant words. "O-Baké de gozaimas'" (It is augustly an Honourable Skeleton). But we are too old and wise to be frightened by bogies. Besides, Kyosai was famous for his ghouls, ghosts, and demons. And we have never seen a work of his on any of these subjects. So we command the unrolling of the Kake-Mono. Our nerves are strong, and the sunlight is beating brilliantly down upon the dusty street, casting black across the mouth of the shop the shadow of its eaves. Decidedly not the moment for supernatural tremors. Behind us the crowd that always gathers to watch a European shopping, and rejoice over his expensive delusions, hums with expectant delight. The old man stands and unrolls the picture. Instantly the sun has gone in, and from the dark recesses of the shop comes a cold, sickening zephyr, heavy and horrible with the scent of things long dead. There, under the bright glare of midday, that picture grips us by the throat with the ghastly horror of its presentment. It is indeed a skeleton. Across the canvas, with face half turned in a sidelong grin towards the

spectator, stalks a dead thing, livid and awful. Upon its bones trail long discoloured filaments and strips of rotting flesh. The bony eyesockets have a baleful emptiness, and from the fearful mouth glare disconnected teeth, whose greenish gums have not yet entirely fallen away. The figure has an airy impiousness of pose, which suggests that soon it may walk forth into the world, and infect creation with the noisomeness of its breath. The skeleton stands stark and clear among the decaying rags of flesh; and, about the head of the grim thing, over the sodden wisps of its hair, floats a bridal veil. The painting is accomplished in horrible subtleties of grey and black, with foul pinks, and blues, and lilacs, welded into a harmony of suggestive hideousness. It is a dead thing instinct with life. It is a fearful resurrection from a seven-months grave. It is Death made horribly incarnate, and its movements exhale the sickening air of eternal rottenness. The very presence of it stinks under the clear light of heaven. A dank odour of old decay fills street and sunlight, the nameless chill of corruption made manifest, And the supreme horror of this fearful dead thing is that it lives; that it is full of motion and malevolent vigour, not to be restrained by time or space. No grave, henceforth, can be the prison-house of that rotting dead. The brush of a mighty artist has evoked it from the tomb, and now for ever it haunts the world of life and sunshine. It is ready to leave

its canvas, moving with a floating and stealthy, yet confident step that redoubles the terror.

From the crowd goes up a murmur, from ourselves a gasp. "Roll it away, roll it away," is our cry. The old folks smile at our terror, and roll up that pernicious picture. All breathe a sigh of relief. Once more the sun emerges; once more the air is warm and dry and clean. That picture remains in the shop. No man born could bear to share a house with it.

When wearied of shopping in detail, one may frequent the big bazaars of Tokyo. But here is a damaging leaven of things European, among the many contrivances of Japanese refinement. On the whole the fascination of the bazaars is not so great as that of the small shops. They are filled with rows upon rows and ranks upon ranks of stalls, offering every imaginable variety of thing. There are Parisian essences, and furs and baubles from Birmingham, clashing in every direction with wood-work, lacquer, faience, brocade of cheap but genuine Japanese manufacture. Outside, in the grounds, perhaps, are little toy gardens whose charm atones for the clamorous incongruities of the interior; but, when all is said, the wares of the large K'ankōbas have a multifarious diversity that detracts from their charm, and sends us with pleasure back to the humbler shops, where if patience be our shield and buckler, we may rely at last upon seeing things beautiful.

Shopping, however, is not confined to the streets. For faithful dealers come morning by morning to one's house, bearing bales of rich treasures. While still luxuriating in the bath, we are summoned by the bird-like shrillings of Wataguchi announcing that "Curious man, he come." Hastily donning a cotton Yukata, we hurry into the dining-room, to find the floor paved anew with little ivory elephants, incense-burners, sword-guards, and boastful bowls of Imari. Or, perhaps, it is a picture dealer who brings his wares for judgment: imaginary works of Hokusai, Yosai, Tanyu, Yasunobu, or Korin. He hangs them round the room on pegs already occupied, and descendants vividly upon their merits. This, of a lurid mermaid hovering among skulls in the pallid depths of the sea, is a most meritorious Kyosai; this, of a shapeless peasant driving a bloated cow, is clearly by Hokusai; this other, representing a lead-coloured devil in sweeping robes of green, riding on the swirl of a livid storm-cloud, is an undisputed Yosai. This man having been, with protests, refuted and dislodged, comes an honest youth from a favourite shop, bowed beneath the weight of many bundles. He brings the glory of old priestly robes, sold surreptitiously by the impoverished temples of the Buddha. They are rich with rose and gilding, very splendid and desirable, in the infinite ingenuity of their colouring. Perhaps he brings a temple-curtain, wrought with very heavy gold upon a ground of

flaming crimson ; or an old court suit, complete, with horsehair bonnet, vast lacquer boots and fan ; the robe itself has a petticoat of ivory brocade, and the gown, with its vast sleeves, is of pure imperial violet satin, down which runs a broad double rivulet of solid gold in a wavy design, with enormous peonies in gold at intervals. The thing has a solemn magnificence of beauty ; it is to be bought at whatever risk of workhouses. So the days pass in a long career of shopping, whether of ancient ivories, brocades, or pictures, or of modern Japanese silk-crapes, so delicately exquisite, whose tender tints have no parallel in the West. Japan is the poor man's paradise, but the rich man's dream.

## VIII

### KOREA

AT dawn the roving vessel sights the Land of the Morning Calm. Behind and out of view lie the ragged coasts of Japan. The growing earth lies before the wanderer, bathed in sunlight, a prospect of barren downs. Into many harbours the shores of Korea are lacerated. At the head of a long and tranquil inlet lies Fusan, encircled by rolling hills that are clad in the browns and purples of our own North Country. The harbour is a broad basin, on whose brink huddles the little town, new and glaring under the implacable sun of a cloudless morning. It is an erection of Japanese energy rather than of Korean. It is only at some distance from the seaport that one comes upon the native Korean settlement—a leprosy of hovels, filthy and dark, where, in packed squalor, each family huddles contentedly into an airless, lightless cavern that should not be sufficient for one individual's comfort. The Japanese have built their town upon the water's edge, and up the hillside go wandering its crude and as yet unsettled streets. The whole prospect is absolutely open and treeless,

except for a little holy promontory that juts forward from the shore, and bears a temple enshrined among firs. Beyond, behind, to either side, the country rolls up and away to the crests of the naked mountains. Along the inlet, as we approach, appear in places rude scars of red earth, where stunted pine trees grow, but the hills from crown to base are splendid in the unclothed dignity of their volume. They stand stern and simple as Ingleborough; rich, too, in his same wealth of sombre brown and violet of heather and dead winter's herbage.

The shore is seen speckled with white dots which are discerned at last to be the natives, ambling up and down the cliffway in their flapping white petticoats of linen. Under Japanese supervision they are employed in constructing a road from the town towards the embryonic railway. Meekly they toil and labour to and fro under the sun, building the causeway along the face of the inhospitable rock. Their faces have a stupid stolidity of apathy beneath their curious hats of horsehair. Almost featureless are their flat round countenances, that stare out at the wanderer with an expressionless expression of unintelligent indifference. Their garments are of the greatest possible inconvenience for work. Over hugely baggy trousers of white linen their limbs are swathed in voluminous skirts of the same material. Their invariable coiffure is the horse-hair bonnet. This confection resembles that of a

Welsh sorceress ; its little peak is designed as a shrine for the sacred topknot. For every Korean, who is not a mere unconsidered bachelor, sets the utmost store by this inviolable adornment. It is the sign of his dignity, of his manhood, of everything that he values. Its construction appears to be simplicity itself. The hair is twisted up into a small bun, and transfixes by a pin headed with amber, pearl, or coral. But the coiffure is a matter of ritual observance, consuming several hours, and necessitating several pairs of hands for its accomplishment. Thus the topknot is a deadly bar to efficiency in military employments. For of doubtful value is a soldier who requires two hours and several comrades for the successful doing of his hair. But it would be a stalwart reformer who should propose any emendation of this sacrosanct ornament. If anything could stir the apathy of the Korean into revolt, it would be even the most reverent proposal to simplify the arrangement of the national coiffure. Therefore the topknot remains inviolate, and is likely long to do so. And, until it be reformed away, there is little hope for the advance of the Koreans in civilisation or vitality. So do great effects hinge upon the smallest of causes.

Passing by the native town on our course, we come to the station of the proposed Saoul-Fusan Railway. Here linked trucks are conveying Korean coolies to the works. Special kindness provides us with a truck for ourselves, and we are to be the first Euro-

peans carried on the line. The train starts leisurely, moving through the clear sunshine in which still is a slight tang of winter's cold. The natives crowd to watch as it passes. Women of the working class appear, clad in white jackets that do not reach their breasts, and white petticoats that commence below the navel. Children, in varying degrees of nudity, pullulate in the dusty street. One wears, with little else, a monstrous bonnet of horsehair, differing from the common in many folds, waves, crests, and battlements. This is said to mark some social or educational rank. This infant of seven is, presumably, the son of a gentleman, or a B.A. of some Korean foundation. The train sweeps slowly from the village, and soon is skirting an old abandoned city. Evidently this is of reverend antiquity. It stands, like the Greek colonies of the Northern Mediterranean, on a little hill emerging from the broad plain. It is girt by a wall pierced at intervals with elaborate gates of Chinese pattern. It is all dead and collapsed. Within its circuit are the rich remnant of palaces for its nobles. There is one so stately and ambitious as to have been clearly the house of kings. Among the wreckage wave tangled pines and boughs of bare and blossoming almond, whose petals drop rosy on the grass that is growing over the heaped relics of ruin. The workmanship is of wood and tile. The great gates are very beautiful and heavily wrought, though tottering now to their fall. The palaces them-

selves, silent and void, gaping to the sky, are built with all the refinement of architectural ornamentation that Korea received from China, and handed on to Japan. Their scheme is, of course, simple and elementary of construction—mere walls sufficient to support a single heavy roof. But they are patently of one kin, these decaying bones of a civilisation dead, with the painted and gilded temples of Shiba and Nikko. The Japanese have not by one jot or tittle added to the architectonic ideas that they accepted from the mainland. They have merely enriched and elaborated, according to their nature, which, while denying them the possibility of invention, has endowed them with the capacity of endlessly improving and adapting each art of other countries on which they have laid their hands.

The railway is, of course, a mere infant. At present it runs hardly more than a dozen miles, through a country of wild purple fell. Then it sweeps round upon a broad river-bed, and abruptly ceases on the brink. The prospect is now altered. We are gazing out over an enormous plain, the immemorial silt of the water, towards a range of hills pale in the uttermost distance. The whole interval is filled by the vaporous levels of the Maremma, stretching ever further and further into the mists. From this immoveable ocean rise a score of little islets—small humps of earth clustered with trees and crowned with hovels of human habitation. Immediately be-

fore us sluggishly creeps the wide stream, parent of this miasmatic desolation. Unctuous and slow the river uncoils his course. On his surface comes drifting down a great clumsy skiff, with all sail set, manned by a mob of white-clad Koreans. The whole outlook is one of smooth and immortal hopelessness. The country seems to make no complaint, because there is none to hear. It has long settled into the apathy of resigned despair. After a brief rest the train conveys us back through the sweeping hills to Fusan. And thence we set sail once more round the rocky and perilous coast towards Chemulpo.

Chemulpo sits upon a vast and tidal harbour. Beyond interminable mudflats at low tide gleam the pompous European buildings of this European port. The harbour is studded with islets, on one of which the persevering may discover *Viburnum Carlesi*. Behind the town comes rolling down the breadth of the Han River, across whose pallid expanse the eye is carried to serried ranges of blue mountains that wander, rank behind rank, to the inhospitable interior and the Great White Alps of the North. The Han River descends through a plain of his own creation, on whose border rises here and there a wooded peak of hill away in the distances. Chemulpo is merely for mercantile purposes. It is thence that one takes train for Saoul, the capital. (Saoul, pronounced approximately to rhyme with "howl," means no more

than this: a Korean would talk of London-Saoul for the capital of England.) The country is drear and indistinguishable—a series of levels clothed in dull sedge and rush, that stretch away from our sight towards the flank of some hillock. Occasionally we traverse a sparse belt of spindly pines. A scab of hovels disfigures a marsh, where human energy has feebly tickled the black earth into yielding a mouthful or so of food. Everywhere the great plain unfolds its breadth towards the violet hills. Now and again a rounded chain of downs sweeps along the course of the railway. These are thickly peppered with small semicircular mounds of grass. The number of such mounds is incalculable. They fill the landscape for an expanse of miles. Sometimes they are trim and clean, sometimes fronted with stone devils or obelisks of phallic design. More often they are returning gradually to the level of the earth—mere neglected hummocks of herbage. And these, in their innumerable multitude, are the graves of all the Koreans dead in a score of centuries. The world is full of them. They are far more in number than the houses of the living. Death, in this strange country, is in fuller evidence than life. It is, indeed, a land sacred and set apart for the dead. The living have here no place; earn a difficult livelihood on sufferance in odd nooks of this enormous graveyard that is Korea. Every disused mortal shell has a grave to itself, and after these many ages the country belongs of right to the

myriad myriad dead that occupy it rather than to the few wretched creatures who crawl and scratch upon its surface, imagining themselves to be alive. The poor and undistinguished have their small mounds everywhere; on some hillside is an avenue of stone pillars marking the tumulus of prince or noble. In one lovely valley lies in state that evil person the Dowager-King. Far away, for the third time buried with honours divine, are laid the skull and the one bone that are all the remains of the Queen he murdered. The kings and queens of Korea do not go lonely to the grave. With them are buried the richest treasures of art that the nation has ever produced—great platters, cups and ewers of dainty shape, made in a wonderful pale porcelain whose secret has long ago perished from the world. Occasionally body-snatchers, prompted by hopes of gain, dare the fearful penalties of a Korean prison to disembowel the tomb of some sovereign, dust of many generations, whose dishes and delicate goblets they steal and sell to collectors for imperial prices. Never since has the nation produced anything of independent loveliness to compare with these works of forgotten artists, though, in its time, Europe has been deeply indebted otherwise to this Land of the Morning Calm, for not China, but Korea, was the inventor of movable type and the true parent of printing.

At last the railway crosses an iron bridge that spans the river, and so wanders under a barren sky

into the desolation of the capital. Saoul is girt with a vast and terrible wall, penetrated at the four quarters by huge gateways of high curling roofs, along whose eaves squat ranks of fantastic little devils in faience. All round the city rise rugged and sterile mountains, devoid of promise or life. They are gaunt skeletons, over which is stretched tightly the thin, stiff skin of starvation, cracked in places and torn till it reveals the bony framework of rib and shoulder. So from the thin film of gravel protrudes brutally the bare hideousness of crag and precipice. Up some of these grim acclivities runs the Great Wall, engineered with a marvellous solidity of skill in endurance. There hardly seems standing place for it on these precipitous faces, yet here it holds itself erect and clammers boldly, outlasting the ages. Within, the city is a grim desert. It boasts a tramway, legations, churches. It has a dreadful Roman Catholic cathedral in scarlet brick, with a purple bishop attached. But, for the rest, it is mere Eastern; shops offer dubious furs, chests clamped with brass, brazen bowls, or small caskets of iron heavily inlaid with intricate runes of silver. In commoner booths the natives haggle for horn spectacles, pipes, and hats; in some, rash merchants (doomed, in the event, to torture and death for their treason) try to clear off a stock of black stuffs by false announcements of the Empress-Dowager's demise. Business has a dreary vivacity along these streets of Saoul—mere con-

catenations of ruts. Little mules bear mighty burdens; native gentlewomen go shawled in emerald silk; here and there a mourner moves on his way, extinguished by the huge hamper which it is the rule to wear for a hat during the period of dole, when you may neither speak nor be addressed, and are officially invisible. For the earlier and acuter stages of bereavement the rule is that you inhabit a minute wig-wam of mats constructed in the street. Accordingly, these, too, add to the variety of the scene. Occasionally a troop of guardsmen pass, looking astonishingly Japanese in their ill-fitting uniforms, and walking, too, with precisely that same independent disorderliness that marks the Japanese soldier on the march. Or it is some high lady of the court closely shuttered in her litter, who is borne along the way to the palace. Then, amid clamours, appears a stately person mounted on a mule and attended by a ragged retinue. He is a noble of quality. Over his head they hold a huge umbrella of crimson silk, and round him his attendants tumble and jostle in a tangled mob.

The streets themselves are wide, and fringed by low, dirty, unambitious shops and houses. In some directions there are small cloistered bazaars, in whose arcades one may chaffer for silks, for great lumps of amber, for cups in enamel, or—greatest delight of all—for gleaming, dusky pearls. By the side of each roadway runs its open sewer, whose balms are scattered

across the grey city by a pitiless chill wind that comes down from the mountains under the iron sky, and sweeps across the level expanses of the town. In the midst flows the national water supply—a stream traversed by stone bridges with ancient stone carvings. This river, though not indeed dry, is nothing more than moist. It only serves to keep damp its bed of immemorial refuse. Very slowly it oozes among the putrid cagmag of centuries, and reduces more recent offal to the condition of its remoter ancestors. From it goes up the crowning fragrance of the capital. In the midst stands the imperial palace, in its walled precinct of broad courtyards, to which admission is gained through a lowering heavy portal, placarded with the imperial signs. The palace frequently changes its site. This is one comparatively new. It is inhabited in place of an older house, abandoned by the King—Emperor as he now styles himself—after the tragedy of his consort. For it was in the old palace that a Japanese mob, abetted (so rumour runs) by someone of position, kicked and hacked to pieces the Queen of Korea. Her crime was her opposition to Japanese ambitions of dominion over the country. Accordingly—for Japanese methods of diplomacy, especially where women are concerned, have always been drastic and abrupt—a concerted plan was made, not without the suspected connivance of the minister, to destroy the Queen. Japanese reporters are said to have arrived by evéry vessel,

prepared to do journalistic justice to the event. And on a dark night of October, 1895, the murderers attacked the palace, depelled such of the guards as had not been bribed to acquiescence, and entered the upper corridors, where they stabbed and hurled through the lattices to the ground below every woman they met, on the chance of her being the Queen. They failed to find their enemy, but captured the King, haled him rudely by his beard, and finally locked him into a closet. Then they redoubled their search, disheartened at the thought that the proved cleverness of the Queen had warned her to avoid her peril. But at last, at the extremity of a passage, they found her. With kicks and blows of blunted swords they destroyed her, stamping her body out of human shape to make matters certain. Then they wrapped the mass in matting soaked with kerosene, and in the courtyard they burned it. In the morning was only left the skull and a finger-bone. The King they kept a prisoner for a year, and in his name issued edicts against the dead, on which he had never set his eyes, though they bore his royal seal. But eventually that astute woman, my Lady Om, perceived her chance. Into her litter, behind herself, she packed the captive; and so away to the Russian Legation. Thus the King regained the power that now he has lost for ever, held in the unrelaxing grip of Japan. The Lady Om has her reward. For she is the real, even if as yet unacknowledged, Empress-Consort of Korea. But

the Emperor has abandoned that fatal palace, and though three separate times he has entombed his murdered Queen in state, he could not bear the sight of that house of memories. The relics of Her Majesty have had these many graves because, in Korea, the place of sepulture depends on the verdict of priests as to its auspiciousness. If anything untoward occur, the corpse is removed to a fresh place, chosen by a new Convocation of Clerics, in place of the old, dishonoured and probably executed. But now and henceforth the Queen sleeps in peace, though even her martyrdom was powerless to avert the ruin of her country.

In the old days Korea was the mark for incessant invasions by her Chinese overlords. They sacked the towns and ravaged the country. To save the court from a fate that made no matter for the insignificant rabble, a whole precipitous range of mountains was cinctured by an impregnable wall. Within this circuit, on the rumour of Chinese approach, the Royal Family, with its entourage, promptly removed, and safely enjoyed the salubrious air of the hills while its subjects were being indifferently massacred in the plains below. The way towards this range lies northward of Saoul, through a modern and frightful gate of European design, which, by Japanese advice, the Government put up after the Japanese victory over China, in place of the old gate which stood to them for a badge of servitude, being the spot at which the King, in royal state, welcomed as a vassal

the arriving ambassadors from Imperial China. Leaving the city, the road traverses a steep cutting between two precipices made by Chinese engineers of long ago. Thus does the trace of Chinese dominion linger in the country. (At one point, indeed, this fate of Korea was subtly linked with that of mediæval Europe. For it was a Chinese invasion of Korea that, for no very obvious reason, sent up the price of herrings all round the English coast during the reign of King Edward III.) Emerging from the rock-cutting, the way wanders' broad and splendid—the clear work of Chinamen—towards the hills. Thence a byeway carries us at a right angle towards the ranges of the royal retreat, whose jagged teeth show clean and firm against the sky. A long journey through copse and brushwood of sedge and iris brings us at last to the foot of the mountains. The path wanders perseveringly up and up, aiming at the black gap of roofed darkness in the frowning wall far overhead on the rugged hillside. The track clammers over boulders and rough places on the open moor. *Anemone cernua* is just opening her violet eye to the sun amid the fluffy silk of her undeveloped foliage. Otherwise the slopes as yet are void and bare of flowers, rolling away down in fold upon fold of brown velvet towards the plainlands remote below, beyond which lies the uncharted distance of fell and field. At last the gate is passed; we are in the safe enclosure. Here is a huge cleft in the range, on

either side of which the mountain-sides rise stony and stark, clear to every pebble in the uncompromising sunlight of the heights. Still the path rises, past a little pavilion, and penetrates deeper into the fastnesses. The mountains seem to tower as we sink in between their knees. On one hand is an imperious jag of precipice far up against the blue. On the other a steep slope rises to a scree of stones at the foot of a shadowed cliff. We follow the course of a stream that brawls in among the rocks. Now we are out of the sun, whose shafts are beating on the opposite face of sheer granite. Our path is among mossy boulders, in ferny dingles, where seed-vessels from last season speak enticingly of wonderful spiræas, digitalis, and delphinium. Then the way climbs above the beck and emerges into the sun once more. Traversing a small hamlet of hovels, where the white petticoats lie bleaching brilliantly in the light, we rise and rise upon the bare hill. Our way takes us by a painted little summer-house jutting out on beams over the worn white bed of the stream. Here we may fancy Korean kings in repose resting after their wanderings in this pleasure-park of necessity, whose palace was still further up among the crags of the summit. Then, over the bare grass, shooting with young green of lilies among the prostrate and scattered pine bushes of the slope, our way carries us dizzily upward over the barren fell towards the crown of the pass.

And here we find again the encircling wall, having traversed the precinct. Through its gate we look out over a waste and illimitable landscape. As far as eye can carry, nothing can be seen but ranges, scree, and shoots of bare gravel. Far below our gaze the world lies immediately deployed. It has the aspect of a raised map. Each miniature ruffle and breaker of seared yellow sand is a ridge of mountains, descending to the sandy plain in a series of sandy ripples. Neither green thing nor sign of life can be seen anywhere across the interminable Sahara that lures one's gaze away and away over the stretches of bare, precipitous dune and down, to the river winding pallidly in the silver haze two or three score of miles beyond. From our high eminence we see all the skeleton hills of Korea outstretched in their unity of desolation ; and, to our right, straight beneath a dark tooth of nude granite, the eye sinks into an unfathomable abyss of twilight, where, robbed long since of the sun that still irradiates the mountains, lies across the indistinguishable plain a dull smear of grey that is Saoul. So we descend abruptly from the hill, plunging into the darkness of approaching night. Behind us, on the flushed granite cliffs, we leave the last signs of the sun. Our way runs downward by leaps and bounds, over the inhospitable gravel of the streaming slope. Here and there a small day-lily digs her toes into the sand and gripes the hillside for sustenance. Otherwise the scree is a Sodom of

sterility. Then our path falls at last into a rocky gorge, where, under a painted canopy of wood, on the very shore of a pale stream, placid as eternity, sits and meditates the Buddha Amida. To come upon this colossus in the dim gloaming is almost uncanny. He is a thing of stone, whitened sedulously by the faithful. In the twilight he gleams with vivid resplendence. One arm is lifted in benediction, and he wears a smile of sweet and subtle sadness, different from that of his brothers in Japan. He is all alone in that lonely place; there is nothing near him, neither abbey nor hamlet. Alone for ever in that shadowy valley, the Buddha ponders for ever by the shores of the quivering water that ripples past his feet. He is old as the hills he guards; the history of his erection, of his worship, has long been lost. He is a stranger now to the country that he redeemed. There, forgotten but never forgetting, the Holy One of the close gorge meditates time and eternity, and draws his gospel from the soundless wavelets before his shrine, that flow imperceptibly past like the years, and so flow on into infinity. Leaving then, untroubled by prayers, the undying wisdom of the Undying, we wend our long and difficult course by a hundred devious tracks to Saoul.

It is to the Buddha that are sacred the sole fertile spots left in this part of the country. Elsewhere the wood has been cut remorselessly for many centuries. But in the walled territories of the great Buddhist

abbeys remain intact the old tangled forests of Korea. Though the Korean is a lifeless creature, compact of brutal vices and brutal apathies and brutal virtues, yet in the country that gave Buddhism to Japan the ancient holiness still retains some of its authority. It is a mistake to deny the Korean all religious feeling; indeed, he is such a voiceless enigma that perhaps all national criticisms are best avoided, or put forth behind a hedge of precautions. He is the dark horse of the East; and his potentialities may be either vast, or non-existent. It is safer not to dogmatise. His religion still has life. Nor is he devoid of temples. He has his ancestors, and he has the Temple of Heaven in Saoul. More than these, he has still, however tarnished, the pure brightness of the Middle Vehicle, the worship undefiled of Amida, the Deathless Buddha of Endless Light. To him rise the stately abbeys on the wooded hills. For did not, in his lifetime, Shaka-Buddha, Humble and Holy, prescribe for the weary soul the delight of the eyes as the best medicine for the spirit? And the Korean finds no delight of the eyes so keen as the prospect from some forested hilltop. This is his one employment that may be safely called a pleasure, to go with his pipe to the summit of some mountain, and there to spend the day in voiceless contemplation.

Crowning the downs, walled in among their dense woodlands, lie the Buddhist abbeys of Korea. They

give hospitality to the wanderer, who, arriving when night has fallen across the world, gropes his way up the steep slope beneath the heavy, invisible forest that envelops him so soon as ever he has crossed the threshold of the great gate in the wall. The wanderer arrives at last on the cleared plateau that reveals the monastery gleaming pale in the darkness. His lantern lights him to the door, where a white-robed monk receives and conducts him through a refectory with brazen bowls that flash in the fire-light, to a small cloister open to the stars. There beneath its arcades we eat such food as we have brought, while the brotherhood looks on with benevolent indifference. Then we are inducted to our minute cells in this courtyard, where we make shift to sleep. At dawn we wake—or rather cease to attempt to sleep. Drawing back the wooden shutter, we thrust forth our heads into the acrid freshness of a spring morning. The hillside falls steeply away from our window, and our gaze wanders far away towards a remote chain of blue mountains, behind which the sun is sending up the glory of his heralding rays. Beyond the forest, far down and away across the distant plain, lies a threaded chain of lakes, gleaming with pure fire in the first light of day. The air is clean and sparkling. At our feet lies the boscage of the forest, jewelled among the dead leaves of yesteryear with the pale stars of a tiny lilac corydalis, most clear and delicate in colour.

on its carpet of rusty brown. In the crystal silence are heard the song of thrushes and the cry of wild pheasants in the brake. After rising, we are received by the abbot in state, who makes unlock for us the doors of the sanctuary. The church is small and rough, occupying one side of a quadrangle, whose others are filled by cloisters, and by the painted chapter-house, with its lectern and drum. The portals of the Holy Place swing open, revealing a crude and gaudy image of the humble Saviour of the world. The assembled brethren bend in reverence. Into the clear air rises the ancient Litany of Adoration, "Namu, Amida Buts', Namu, Amida Buts'" The voices of the bowed worshippers are full of that strange plangent note of sorrow which is so noticeable in the singing tones of Japan. But their hearts are not filled with sorrow, as they proclaim their faith in the Redeemer. Their devotion is to them no matter of doubt or tragedy. They take life very quietly, with gentle acquiescence, for all its passions and storms. They are true Koreans, obedient to the apathetic tradition of many thousand years of slavery. So the monks make their profession. Then the wanderer lays his offering before the shrine, and departs on his way down the hill through the trees, whose blossoming undergrowth is now clearly visible in the daylight that flickers through the naked boughs. After several miles of wandering over a moor of iris, he comes at last to the sluggish

expanse of the river, where a wooden bark is to drift him down with the hours to Chemulpo, that he may thence take ship for Port Arthur. Looking back, as the bark drowzes down the face of the waters, the wanderer sights a high hill far in the distance, whose slopes amid the barren ranges are dark with woodland. Within that girdle of walled forest lie the long low whitewashed walls of the abbey, where the Buddha has given comfort to the weary and for-wandered. So gradually the monastery passes into a vague haze and vanishes in the perspective of sterile downs. We come at last, through an interminable sameness of ever-changing landscape, to the broad reaches of the river, where the tide flows up to meet it at Chemulpo. And so away to China.

And our final verdict on the calm and tragic land that fades behind us into the pallid mists, is most aptly expressed by Wataguchi's terse and vigorous condemnation. Korea is, indeed, as he says, "a very sometime-come-to place."

## IX

### IMPRESSIONS ROUND PEKING

THE greatest city of the Far East is now not difficult of access. From Korea the steamers come by Dalny and Port Arthur to Chefoo, and if the wanderer be ready to face the discomforts of a small Russian tramp, he can make the journey in four or five days. Encircled by arid yellow hills lies Dalny in its vast bay, swept by the bitter winds out of Manchuria. Dalny looks comfortable and youthful. Red brick begins to flourish. So the steamer passes out of the bay and on to Port Arthur. If Saoul of Korea be the city of Life in Death, Port Arthur is the city of Death in Life. The double harbour is ghastly with the great engines of destruction, and the town itself a barrack of soldiers and sailors. Its roads resemble a stone-quarry, and it boasts one hotel—a building that possesses a door and two windows. Close behind lie sterile mountains, cinctured and traversed by walls, and populous with guns. The rough streets are filled with all grades of the Russian army and navy, in all conditions. The sun overhead shines down with a dusty,

leaden glare upon the terrible crowd that shifts among the brothels and drink-shops of the wayside. Droschkies jostle and leap upon the rocky road. The fairer sex goes to and fro, represented by golden-haired ladies in sealskins or in sapphire plush. The place stinks in the nostrils of the Immortals. It is a kind fate that carries the traveller on across an uncharted sea to Chefoo and thence to Taku.

The first sight of China takes the form of a long, low mudbank, with a ruined hummock of buildings, lying forlorn under a chilly sky. A launch carries the wanderer up a narrow muddy river to Tang-ku. Tang-ku is a railway-station set down in the middle of a Sahara. On all sides stretches, in an infinity of level hideousness, a vast desert of sand, marked only by great wigwams for the condensing of salt, and by the vanishing procession of telegraph poles, that wanders bravely away, a serried rank of pioneers, into the unexplorable. The train follows their lead across the waste to Tientsin. Tientsin is the metropolis of Northern China, full of Europeans and the architectural triumphs of the Occident. As dusk descends, the indistinguishable track of desert gives place to occasional ruins of beautiful buildings wrecked by the zeal of the West to impose its respectable ideas upon the East; and then suddenly the Great Wall of the city approaches, and, after devious windings about it, the train enters the capital and comes to rest at the terminus. A railway-station in the heart

of China is as startling an anomaly as a crinoline in the Parthenon could be. One hardly feels the thing to be real. And the impression of incongruity must have been heightened when the Son of Heaven and his Divine Grandmother themselves went in person by train out of the city to the Western Tombs.

The kernel of Peking is now a desolation, among which the Legations squat forlornly. Across what was once a road, and now looks like the bed of the Var in summer-time, a few whitewashed hotels squint over towards the Legations, hoping for protection from their neighbourhood. All round lies China. Up and down the streets goes the kaleidoscopic life of the East. Processions meet the eye at every point, and everywhere a turmoil of colour. Banners broidered and brilliant go fluttering along the ways; great mandarins are carried by their retainers in pomp; strings of camels jostle with the brightness of funeral processions; lines of multi-coloured robes throng upon businesses unnamed; and, closely shuttered in their litters, princesses of Manchuria, crowned with scarlet roses, whose fire one can divine through the thin curtain of bamboo, are borne from palace to palace in their gilded security high upon the shoulders of their escort. The narrow alleys glow with life and gold; on all sides gilded boards and pennons and poles flash up to the sun. The roadway is of immemorial age, built with vast blocks of squared stone, a thing to outlast the memory of the Cæsars. But

one stone in five is missing, and in its place gapes a black gulf of slime and mud. The footways are a streaming torrent of life. And under the walls squat dealers in precious wares, with little bottles of jade and glass and agate, cunningly painted and daintily contrived: with little shimmering heaps of loose jewels that blink under the sun—rough pearls and dull, twisted amethysts, agate, amber, jacinth, and all the colours of gems that have no name beside their glorious cousins, the rubies, sapphires, and emeralds of the South. Everywhere dignity and breeding walk abroad incarnate, and, in the heart of the most bitterly hostile city of the East, the traveller from the West moves among tolerant faces and a polite indifference that warms at times into a positive, helpful courtesy. Even at night he can go out into the black darkness with its flaring splashes of light among the byeways of the city. Possibly he is wise if he chooses not to go too far. And they that live there must know Peking better than the passer-by. In any case the passer-by, in his blissful innocence, may well feel a sense of immediate safety among the Chinese, which is a matter of more surprise to himself than to his wiser compatriots, who know better the unsuspecting Occidental and his patiently malevolent and subtle enemy of the East.

Shoulder-high, in a litter carried by mules, the traveller goes through the city on his way up into the wild hills, where the tombs of the fallen dynasty

lie and the Great Wall clammers across the mountains to separate the cradle of the nations in the West from the nursing-mother of all the civilisations in the East. As his way is threaded through the crowds he sees the bustling life of China in all its currents. Yellow-tiled temples of fantastic curve and gable tower over the humble grey houses. Pagodas and palaces of monstrous shape pass by. Were it not for them and their marvels of fantasy, that rushing stream of colour, that flashing gold everywhere, that mixture of class and nation in the narrow, brilliant alleys, might make the traveller wonder that he is not in one of the glimmering byways of Byzantium, when Justinian was Emperor and Theodora went clothed in pearls and purple.

Passing out through the first great gate of the Wall, the road turns at right angles through a similar portal in the enormous square that thus makes each gate of Pekin a double defence, and so out into a flat and barren country of yellow soil, diversified only, in the month of March, by ruins, by derelict tombs, and by a few sad trees. The journey is interminable across the plain towards the hills that show dimly so far away. Nor does a mule-litter hurry upon the road. The tomb which the wanderer sees half a mile ahead, when he looks up forty minutes later seems never appreciably nearer. Unless he be of an otiose temperament, or be provided with the works of Jane Austen, the journey is liable to be

found dull. But in the company of Emma Woodhouse the hours pass lightly at Hartfield, and the wanderer is surprised at last to find himself before a small islet of crag that rises from the sea of waste, an outpost of the great mainland of mountain far beyond. Out above the calm sea it stands, a characteristically Chinese compilation of pinnacle and precipice. At its foot, among the green wreckage of the shore, where the sea of sand breaks against the island's edge, lies a little monastery with stone for the wanderer's pillow. While the dawn is yet young the monks arouse him to send him upon his way. He sees the temple opened for the day, and the poor peasants that come to bow down in prayer before the Holy and Humble One, who, long since, has told the world that remorse and prayer are alike vain in face of the truth that a man's destiny is only his own act, and his doom only the ghost of his own wrongdoing. Notwithstanding, the poor and weary come ceaselessly before the Great Healer of Sorrow, who has promised that he will give them rest; and there, under the eyes of the Buddha, "who looks out across the sound of prayer," their devotions are no less simple and passionate than those offered under other stars to another Healer of Sorrows and to Mary His mother, that star of a younger world.

Before leaving the place of peace there is a different sight. In a clump of trees, huddled behind a ruined wall, lies a range of ruined buildings and a broken

tower dark among the pines. Here is an old imperial palace, deserted not long since by the Empress-Dowager. The wanderer passes through deserted courtyards and corridors emptied now of all imperial voices. Here are great storerooms piled high with mouldered hangings folded away for ever, and again, other chambers filled with the lumber of heaped chairs and thrones of emperors dead these many years gone. Chairs, tables, stools, are of those pure and gracious Chippendale designs which our maker borrowed from the artificers of Spain, who also sent them far across the sea by Jesuit missionaries to the imperial court of China. Their shape, as they lie rotting in the palace of Tangshan, is the shape of those very precious specimens that steal now and again into the markets of the West, and are gathered in religiously by the rich. Beyond the labyrinth of ruined cloisters the wanderer comes into an open court, where two great marble baths lie steaming up into the face of the pale dawn. They are guarded by high balustrades of white fretted marble, and though their crystal is choked now by slime and slush, their marbles fouled by neglect, and their steps untrodden henceforth by the delicate feet of forbidden imperial beauties, their gracious warmth lives on under the stars and sky, and they alone, in this palace of things corrupt and dead, continue without change or any of the chills of death. They are like ghosts—sudden, terrible reminders of what

once was. Their presence imparts a grim life to the rotting palace. While their breath still goes up warm to heaven the lion and the lizard can never be sole tenants of the courts where emperors departed once revelled and drank deep. Again, through the passages one goes forward into a fantastic garden, along sunken alley-ways with twisted trees and the fantasies of rock-work, to a square wooden portal. Through this frame the wanderer looks out upon a placid lake. Its shores are fringed and netted with little paths that wind among clumps of tortured pine, or crags heaped into miniature mountains. It is broken into inlets, it is studded with islets, where stand falling summer-houses and pavilions of pleasure. The holy lotus runs rank, and reeds grow thick in the bathing-place of queens. But in the last days of its decay the lake lies ghostly and perfect—still, without flush or ripple in the absolute calm of the dawn. Beyond, in an opening of the forest, carved long ago for the joy of imperial eyes, is revealed a violet mountain-range whose image stretches, virgin and undefiled, upon the breathless surface of the water.

The place is so dead and calm that its effect is one of cold artificiality. The winding paths are not really empty, the palace not indeed a desert. Along those shores in the heavy silence go bright people of long ago. The hush is so vivid under the saffron dawn that one can hear the rustle of those rich silks

laid useless now in mildewed coffers. The wanderer is an intruder by that quiet shore. That calm lake—those gardens with their pines and rockeries; those summer-pavilions that stand slowly lapsing into the unruffled water, those beds of lotus, those pale reflections of the hills—belong not to him, but to others long vanished, whose voices yet throng the stillness. About the winding ways go precious dead women upon whom we have no right to look—queens, empresses, and mothers of queens, passing delicately by on silken feet; great ladies, fan in hand for the pleasure of their princesses; high nobles and lords-in-waiting privileged into the holy garden of their sovereign; and in their sacred glories the pale phantoms of emperors that are not, to us that behold, so much now as a name upon a grave. The wanderer passes silent from the lake of unearthly silences—the lake immemorially sad with the tranquil sorrow of a thing whose fate has long been written, signed, and sealed.

Through a rotting Chinese town, crowded with faces indifferent or malevolent, the litters move on towards the uplands. Boxers have here been anticipated, but fail, providentially, to appear. Up over wild moorlands one approaches the valley of the Ming tombs. At last the heights of the pass are reached, and a fantastic gate of three doors crowns the summit. From its platform the wanderer looks far, far down out across a tremendous plain, ringed in,

beneath a wild sky, by range upon range of blue peaks and pinnacles. Never were emperors more imperially buried. Within this vast circuit, until lately, no cultivation was allowed, nor any sound of man or weapon; so that the holy silence was never broken except when an emperor was carried to his rest. The eye traces the causeway of the funerals away to a remote village of small rectangular plantations dotted without plan upon the slopes of the farthest hills at the other side of the plain. Descending, we pass through a second gate, very massive and painted in red, down towards the levels. The way is bounded by giant columns set very wide apart upon the moorland, and carved with many devices. These lead on to a third archway of a single door that is blocked by an enormous tortoise within, upon whose back a great stèle stands far up into the vaulted roof. This passed, an astonishing sight is met. Can there be here amid death and quiet a mart, a fair of monsters? It is the famous avenue of colossal beasts that stretches away, grey and unbroken, across the valley. Two huge camels kneel, then two stand; four lions follow; then elephants, dogs, and all the delirious monsters of Chinese imagination. Finally, priests and holy men, pre-historically vast, line their Emperor's way to the fourth gate, high and pinnacled with a fretwork of marble that towers over each of its three doors. Beyond this a broad causeway of white marble

sweeps forward over a broken bridge to the steep ascent that leads to the tomb of Yung-lu the Emperor. This stands in a precinct of Arbor-vitae, and is enclosed by a mighty rectangular wall.

Passing through the portico and across a first courtyard, by two little shrines, to a second portal, one comes in sight of the tomb. This is a building of incredible proportions, like a gigantic barn. Within it is perfectly bare, the roof supported by columns of entire trees several yards in circumference. In the centre of this vast desert is a small enclosure, in front of which stands as large a table, supporting two ricketty candlesticks and an incense-burner. And here, under the flags, sleeps the Emperor Yung-lu, and around him are all his treasures lying—the gold, the jade, the ivory, the amber; the delicate fabrics of silk, and porcelain, and jewel-work; the holy books in which he read; the robes of state in which he went; and all the wrought treasures of his delight. And other treasures, too, no less dear, went with the Emperor to his rest. For by his side they laid his dearest ladies and the friends that loved him best, and the servants that were chosen to herald their lord into heaven. So the grave closed over all, and the soul of the Emperor was to be happy. What does he feel now? For his bones are still inviolate, indeed, and his treasures undisturbed, but the Mings are fallen, and the House of Manchuria, though it will not leave

entirely dishonoured and unguarded the tombs of its predecessors, yet sees no reason to respect them unduly. So the rich sacrifices have ceased and all the worship : a few decrepit guardians drowze by the doors of Yung-lu, in place of his crowded priests and ministrants. The floor of the shrine is dark with dust, and the tottering table can hardly support its wretched load of pewter. And, outside, the roof-beams are rotting to their fall, and the imperial tiles of the Yellow Dragon drop daily from the eaves and are not heeded. The carved balustrades of marble and the stairways are broken, and between the great flags of the outer vestibule wild gladiolus and iris have made their home; the day-lily flaunts across the courts, and among the stones the violent purple of the anemone alone keeps alive the tradition of things imperial. It is well for the Emperor that he sleeps soundly, that he never leaves his grave to mount the high tower at the back of the precinct, and look out upon a world that has forgotten his name, and bows down to a race of foreigners from the usurping North. Perhaps the time of his vengeance will come; for long since has South China been clamouring against the intruder race. And, with the death of the terrific woman whose life alone upholds the House of Manchuria, the corrupt and unnatural government will go like a dam in spate, and make way for a restored dynasty of the fallen Mings.

From the Tombs the wanderer threads a fresh way through the deserted valley towards the uplands that lead him to the very foot of the mountains. Out of the little village of Nang-kou the road winds restlessly upwards into the hills towards the high pass that is crossed by the Great Wall of China. The road is narrow and poor for one of the highways of the world. As we mount, ceaseless strings of camels go past, up or down to the plains of east or west. The mountains are rugged and craggy, running into cloudland or down into invisible abysses. They shine under the wet, grey sky like crumpled brown velvet, shot with green and violet where marsh or rock predominate over the wild brown grass of the moors. Below the road, from time to time, torrents leap tempestuously into the world beneath, or roar unseen in unexplored ravines on either hand in the folds of the hills. From time to time high crenelated walls run recklessly up the acclivities—outposts of the Empire's defence. In one village the road passes under a marble archway of pre-Chinese antiquity, whose face is carved with strange designs out of the kingdoms down towards India; and the richness of its decoration gives a note of the Renaissance, remote and Oriental though it be. The toppling crags are crowned here and there with towers, and from one high rock-front, far above mortality, a great intaglio of the Buddha looks forth. His holy symbols are carved about him, and on either side of his

glorified head is deeply cut that immemorial emblem, older than all earthly creeds recorded, yet exclusively claimed by one—the cross.

At last the road takes a steeper gradient up into the mist, and, after a final climb, the summit of the pass is reached. To right and left, far away into the clouds, goes wandering a Titanic wonder, grim and ghostly in the pallid light, the creation of giants when the world was younger—the Great Wall of China. Dark and massive it spans the road, and so up and into the fastnesses of the mountains away and away on either side. From its rampart we gaze far down through a gap of the ranges to a plain infinitely low and remote : the plain that leads on to the greater plain of Mongolia, the Cradle of Nations. One looks into both hemispheres from the height of this Wall, the watershed of the world. For turning again, one sees far back into the oldest empire of the East. Here is one of the sights of the earth, one of the landmarks of humanity, to be trodden with respect by human feet. It is awful in its greatness, pathetic in its magnificent uselessness, this labour of mortality that would need half the number of all men born for its protection. But it belongs to the days when men were big, and did big things, without any higgling reckonings of results.

Thence, after this sight of one among man's greatest things done, the wanderer returns to Peking, from Nang-kou, along the enormous causeway by

which the Ming emperors went to the grave. The road now is neglected and ruinous, like a sterile river-bed, but here and there the magnificence of its cyclopean bridges of marble recalls the impression of the Wall, and one muses over the monumental silliness of the European who tries to compare Japan with China—the nation whose boasted antiquity has only resulted in a few primitive stone castles and a quantity of beautiful painted wooden temples, with the calm, unassertive race, that has mothered the science of the world, and marked off the boundaries of empires and continents by an indefeasible fiat set up for ever in stone as immovable as the hills it crowns.

## X

### NIKKO, KEKKO

HAVING seen Naples, the traveller, if he be prudent, does not expire, but reserves his energies of admiration for Nikko the Holy, until he has visited which, the Japanese proverb denies him all right to use the word "beautiful." It is now nearly three hundred years since Tokugawa Iyeyasu died. Before the days of the Great Shogun, Nikko was only a small village far up among the brawling rivers in the heart of the mountains. But the Regent marked the place for its beauty, and when, full of years and honours, he passed away, he left instructions that his bones should be laid in a quiet glen at Nikko. For a few seasons his body lay entombed at Shidzuoka, where he had died, but at last it was carried with full imperial pomp through Yeddo and along a broad way, up to Nikko in the fantastic hills whose shape, on clear days, can be seen in the blue distances north of the capital. All the subject princes united to honour the final translation of the great dead. The temple-shrine grew rich with offerings. The Kings of Luchu and Korea raised lanterns

of wonderful workmanship in his court, and the immortal Cat of Jingoro sleeps above his porch. But of all tributes the humblest is now become the grandest. For a poor noble, having no wealth for a worthy memorial, planted instead along the road from Shidzuoka to Nikko an avenue of cryptomeria. And these, now, with the lapse of centuries, are grown enormous and splendid, enveloping the holy way throughout its length with a dense and solemn shade.

Through this stately aisle the traveller approaches Nikko. The town lies up the slope of a narrow gorge, while below roars the river against its walls of unsunned rock. On either side rise swiftly the skirts of the mountains, clothed in a tangle of azalea. In the narrowest and highest point of the gorge stood once the sacred bridge of red lacquer, opened only for the holy footfall of imperial envoys coming to do honour to the dead who bound the Emperor in so secure a bondage that three hundred years could not have loosed it had circumstances not aided. Now the bridge is gone, swept away in the typhoon of two years ago, and in its place, the chasm from mossy crag to mossy crag is spanned by a construction of wood, along which even barbarian feet from the West are allowed to tread. The rocks themselves are bushy with shrub and blossom. Fritillaries sprout from their crevices, and along their sunless sides run the broad shining leaves of the conandron, with its clusters of purple stars, gold-eyed, a miniature potato

of three inches. Above the bridge the river-bed widens, and in the glens made by the mountain spur that comes down at this point to narrow the valley, lie the tombs of the Shoguns, embosomed in the depth of cryptomerias. Leaving below to the left in the fall of the glade, shrines and treasure-houses, courts and sepulchres of the dead (fit and interminable matter for guide-books), the wanderer may wind his way in the sunset up the little flagged path in the forest between the vast trunks of the cryptomerias, that rise, huge cathedral columns, smooth and bare, a hundred feet and more to the arching vault of their earliest branches. The hillside is built over with rank upon rank of these pillars, touched now in the sunset to a glow of warm red, and between their shafts the sinking sun throws long arrows of light, dappling the young green of spring with which the ground is covered. The air is full of gold in impalpable motes, and the eye, looking west, meets a rich and pervading glare of fire, in which the flowering cherries and magnolias below, by the shrines, are transfigured to an immobility of brazen incandescence. In the glow that penetrates among the trunks, the flowers of the underwood take an opulent glamour, in which they seem radiant and transparent. Green buds of lilies gleam above beds of may-blossom, great sprays of wild Jew's mallow, and large-flowered white wineberry become vivid gold and silver, while, on the ground, a violet with strangely dissected leaves

becomes lucent as an amethyst in glimpses of the sunset. The path winds upwards to a tiny shrine of stone, with an image of Fudo-Buddha, whence the eye casts down into the forest on the descending slope of the hill, and so across the river-bed towards the rugged slopes of Nyo-δ-san, which towers up in the distance, a jagged tooth of azure and purple—last spur of the range that culminates in the Holy Nantai-san.

In the hotels of Nikko, evening by evening, the dealers from the little town below bring their wares—silks, ivories, and furs in many kinds. Relying upon the traveller's stupidity in conceit, they bring nothing that is not valueless or frightful to the eye that has learned to discriminate the beautiful things of Japan. But their own shops reveal better things when once a perception that the European is not such a fool invariably as he is generally has dawned upon the mind of Japan, so reluctant to display its treasures where they may fail of due appreciation. In especial there is one shop in Nikko which has the reputation of offering for sale better things than almost any other in Japan. One passes by the house of the proprietor along a flagged pathway into a quiet garden of rounded stones, with small bushes of azalea dotted about the pools and fountains. On this the shop faces. Lying upon the floor the wanderer is shown first all the gaudy trash with which the Japanese test the good sense of the

European. If he be foolish, he expends large sums on prodigies of ridiculous and laboured ugliness, which on his return are hailed in Mayfair drawing-rooms as things of typical Japanese beauty. If, on the contrary, he be wise, he will continue to lie quiescent, ignoring the garish lacquers and incrusted ivories with which the dealers besiege him, until at last they see that his taste is not to be led captive by rubbish. Then his reward comes forth from private cupboards—tiny boxes of lacquer or old enamel, wrapped in frayed relics of ancient silks, wonderful little pieces of famous work, bearing illustrious names in signatures of gold; or looted jewels of jade from Chinese imperial palaces, stored away in chests inlaid with ivory and agate; or the twisted bronzes of antiquity plundered from some temple of bygone holiness; pictures, again, from great dead painters, swords of classical smithies, china of the oldest Asiatic faience. All these delights are at last produced when the Japanese has tested his customer's taste. So the wanderer departs eventually with difficulty in a passion of delighted poverty, having spent his every penny on a wee box, a little coffer of lacquer, and a medicine-case inlaid with the subtle beauties of old enamel. As he passes the owner's house once more he hears the sound of rejoicing, and is told that his dealer (a young man of considerable degree) is on the eve of marriage. He is even shown the bride, attired like the Queen of Sheba in

scarlet and gold, with ebony hair flowing ; and the preparations for the wedding feast, with all the attendants and guests trailing rich and gorgeous robes. Returning to his hotel, a fantastic fit prompts him to buy some worthless little piece of daintiness and send it down with his compliments to the bridegroom in gratitude for a delightful, if expensive, afternoon spent in the cool darkness of the great shop behind that quiet garden of bronze storks and blossoming cherries. The next day he takes his departure, and his rickshaw whirls him reluctant down the steep main street of Nikko, past the open shops of carved marble in colours, of rich furs, of quaint toys turned in wood, where tiny little Buddhas are for sale in wrought shrines as large as a nutshell, to the station. There a small procession meets him bearing boxes. These are servants of the bridegroom come to return thanks for the traveller's courtesy of overnight. They present two coffers of plain wood, most daintily made in simple and delicate curves. In the one there are found the first courses of a wedding-feast, elegantly packed—the raw fish, the curious mushrooms, the vegetables, jellies, eggs, salads, and all the horrors of Japanese food. In the other is the dessert—strange cakes and twisted confections of pastry, sweetmeats of every colour and shape, and, in the place of honour, an allegorical triumph of decoration in the form of a large white stork flying above a rising sun in pink, the whole composed of sugar

most wonderfully. The traveller conveys his thanks to the messengers, who stand bowing and sipping their breath before the train as it glides out of the station, leaving Nikko and the glorious mountains far behind on its way over the plain of Tokio back to the capital.

One passes from Nikko with the sense of having trodden holy ground. It is so solemn, so quiet, so remote a sanctuary of peace. It lies in the shelter of the everlasting hills. It has the serene pride in calm of a place chosen by the gods and tenanted by the soul of a dead hero. The spirit of Gongen-Sama broods over Nikko. In the hushed air you feel the consciousness of his presence. He has subdued all the beauty of the hills to his own glory. The breathless loveliness of the Holy Place, its cool shadows, its clear waters in the chasm, the sacred darkness of the pine-forest, all combine in homage to the great iron conqueror who lies very peaceful now in the heart of the mountain-glen. He is the God of Nikko. And behind Iyeyasu and above him stands Nantai-san the holy.

## XI

## NANTAI-SAN

OVER Nikko breathes the solemn calm of repose. Its beauty has been reclaimed from the wilderness of nature and made subject to the memory of a great man dead. It has the solemn air of suspension that belongs to all places that have exchanged a mortal for an immortal overlordship. But if Nikko be the glorious shrine of Iyeyasu, another divinity than Gongen-Sama holds the country of the hills.

The track passes upward from Nikko by the course of the river, and then bends sharply to the right, rushing along against the stream towards the strait gorges of the mountains. Indeed, for half its length it runs over the rough stones of the water's edge, and in places where the fury of the typhoon has been strongest, becomes one with the wilderness of rock in the river-bed. Occasionally it skirts green angles in the clothing forest of the slopes that descend to the very shore of the roaring tide. These nooks are vivid and fertile in their wealth of young green things. The golden wreaths of the bending kerria overhead are put to shame by the deeper gold

of the poppywort, whose brilliant blossoms fleck the shadow of the woodland. The white anemone, own sister to the windflower that dances through other woods 12,000 miles away, glimmers here in galaxies among the grass, and the dog's-tooth violet stands up, purple and bronze, above the lower growths of white and rosy stars. The path leads onwards and upwards (like that of a true Christian pilgrimage) over the wild rocks of the river. Suddenly, far above, the peaks of the mountains are seen flaming with a clear zone of blushing pink whose quality recalls the name of no cultivated shrub. The hilltops are some two to three thousand feet in sheer acclivities, all rough with trees of greater and lesser growth. But this clamorous belt of rose is rigidly defined. It runs between the 2,500 and the 3,000 feet. Above and below there is no sign of it. The effect is strange, for the lower hills that rise just to the permitted level are barely capped with a touch of the crimson, which, on the towering pinnacles behind, makes a broad line of colour, ceasing again at the appointed higher level. The quality, too, of the tint is so strange. It cannot be the flower of an azalea, for it lacks the brazen note that appears in nearly all the azalea reds. It resembles more closely some deep-flushed wild peach or almond. In any case it is very richly beautiful and lamentably inaccessible. Meanwhile, the track proceeds over the rocks to a narrow place where the river is cramped between

projecting precipice on the one hand and projecting forest on the other. The skyline of the rock is conspicuous with high and jagged pines. But, beyond, in the distance, the traveller sights a fresh wonder, something startling and almost awful in its grandeur. This is the southern face of Nantai-san.

At the head of the gorge it seems to rise sheer into the immensities of heaven ; and, whereas most mountain sides owe their grandeur to the splendid nudities of crag and rock and precipice, Nantai-san looms terrific by virtue of its garment of forest. It appears a gigantic wall of trees rising sheer up and up into the mists of the day. Its effect of size is stupendous, this straight wall of verdure at the valley's head. The sight takes no credit from purity of outline, as does Fuji-san, nor from rude sterility, like Shirané-san : Nantai-san derives the overwhelming force of its impression from that precipice of indistinguishable jungle, which, in the enormous greatness of its presence and proportions, seems no more than the trifling herbage on an alp. As one draws nearer, the mountain impends ever greater and greater, until its mass has eaten half the sky and the wanderer feels the awe of the Great Holy One, the dead volcano, whose nine thousand feet tower close overhead, seeming as if, like Pelion on Ossa, its summit must be the threshold of high heaven. The path comes close under its menacing shadow, then from beneath a wild, wet precipice sets itself to mount upon the shoulder of

the imminent mountain. It winds up and up, through a tangle of bush and low bamboos, until at last the traveller sets eyes joyfully upon a familiar flare of pink, and realises that he has climbed into the zone of the rosy azalea itself. For, after all, the treasure was an azalea, an azalea with flowers as large as a rhododendron, and the colour of a crimson peach. It is a bush attaining some twenty feet, and flowering only when advanced in growth. Its stems are silver-white. As yet it is leafless, but the glory of its flowers suggests at once the name of Gloria as alone being worthy of their beauty. They are wide and rosy, borne in cloud-like masses, but upon long pedicels, so that each blossom shows separate from its fellows, inviting full appreciation of each pure individual outline. The effect is as if, upon a silvery, leafless birch, a tempest of rosy butterflies had alighted. They seem to flicker and swirl on the glimmering boughs. These tall bushes fill the woodland, till, topping the rise, the track descends through a coppice of oak, over bare ground carpeted with dead leaves, upon Chuzen-ji.

Lake Chuzen-ji has a quiet beauty of her own, lying framed in wooded slopes whose trees come sweeping down to her very shores. The hills rise on all sides, though, from this spot, the bulk of Nantai-san is too close above to be seen. From Chuzen-ji the path of the pilgrims winds up the mountain. By this the faithful scale their way to the shrine on the summit,

where the spirit of Nantai-san is adored. Chuzen-ji is dreamily peaceful and calm, and her shores are dotted with houses where the weary Europeans of the Legations take refuge from the torrid torments of summer in Tokio. It is only in autumn that the lake bestirs herself from her torpor. Then the typhoons sweep terrific through the mountain glens, amid torrential rains, and implacable thunder ; paring away the flanks of the everlasting hills, mowing the forest like grass, and churning the lake to a blind white fury of foam, from which the river goes roaring upon his work of destruction down the valley.

The path wearies at last of the lake-side, and mounts again through fresh woodland, up past a waterfall, upon a desolate level plain among the hills. Dead trees fringe this dead moor, and its herbage is of purple sedge and rush, with blue iris and a small columbine. It is open to the stars, very bare and dreary. Over it looms the bulk of Nantai-san, on this side less richly clothed in forest. From this moor of Seta-ga-hara the whole outline of the mountain stands clear,—the long, stately curve of the volcano, with its steep rush towards heaven. Over the desolation of Seta-ga-hara the stern mass of the holy mountain looms very grim and splendid. On the other side of the plain rise hills lush and green with soft, smooth grass, looking like the sweet places of the Alps, and offering as rich promise of flowers. The track makes its way towards them,

through a vast forest in which every tree stands gaunt and dead, writhing ashen trunks and boughs under an unpitying sky. This jungle of death has its counterpart in that ghastly forest through which the Little Mermaid approached the Witch. These trees might be malignant growths reaching up from the abysmal calms of the sea. There is something terrible in the convulsed dreariness of the stricken woodland, whose despairing motion of protest seems to have been stricken and paralysed by the gods in the supreme crisis of its despair. It is a forest of skeletons. And not only human skeletons are tragic and horrible. After the forest, we come into the smooth downs of smooth grass, only to discover their deceitfulness and fraud. For their verdure is merely a dense garment of green and white bamboo, growing in a serried uniformity of ugliness to the height of three feet on all the hills. Leaving these slopes, then, with joy, we pass into a primeval forest of pines, among which, in the flickering light, lie huge, chaotic boulders, clothed with moss and creeping plants. The pines grow thick and splendid, tossing from their hoary boughs long, pendent streamers of grey like those that attest the antiquity of bottles. Some stand and some are fallen. Some are heavily plumed, others stand stiff and stark. But in and among them all lies that ruin of gigantic blocks. In the twilight of green the place takes a strange holiness, as of some cyclopean temple overthrown long since, and buried in

a growth of vegetation. Footsteps fall dumb upon the moss beneath the shadow, and the track winds solemnly through the gloaming. Suddenly, beyond an arcade of trunks, glimmers the blue light of Yumoto. A moment later we emerge upon the shores of the lake, only to be assailed by the virulent stenches of sulphur that render the spot so salubrious. The effect is that of all the bad eggs that ever were thrown at elections, heated up and passionately stirred. It approaches the intolerable.

Pines frame Lake Yumoto, and all around the steep hills tower boldly. In front is the jagged peak of Shirané-san, but the sacred mountain of Nikko stands out of sight. The sulphur lake is a famous health resort, and one gets accustomed to the smell, as to so many other wholesome but unpleasant things. Further, Yumoto is not so placid a water as Chuzen-ji, for even in spring one may see its surface lashed into whirlwinds of spindrift, and feel the solid wooden walls of the hotel rocking and reeling in the screaming violence of the storms that come down from Shirané-san. And so at last from Yumoto one makes one's way back past Chuzen-ji to the holy peace of Nikko, buried among its gardens and its forests, where the dead rest securely and in honour beneath the shadow of Nantai-san.

## XII

### THE LADY LITTLE WILLOW TREE

HOW few of the many Europeans who visit Japan ever see the real pleasure-houses of the country! The casual stranger spends his three weeks at Yokohama, compiles the notes for his compendious work on Japanese civilisation, and takes his conception of the geisha from Madame Chrysanthème, and his idea of a tea-house from the notorious No. 9 of Yokohama. Only a persevering residence in some genuinely Japanese town brings the European into contact with the genuine *hetaira* of Japan.

Tokio is full of tea-houses, in their six different grades, from the princely Momiji-k'an to the low "gaff," which is only not in name a brothel. It is in the great tea-houses that the Japanese gentleman entertains his European or his own compatriot friends. It is there that the experienced European goes himself for amusement and recreation, when once illustrious influence has won him the admission that he could never otherwise have attained. For no

tea-house of good class will admit any casual European. A trustworthy introduction is required, without which neither money nor persistence will open the tea-house doors to a globe-trotter. A happy evening begins at six, or even earlier, and continues till midnight. The reveller never returns without wondering what amusement analysis can find in those trailing hours; but the fact that he *has* been amused, and well amused, never comes into question. Setting forth in one's rickshaw, the problem of the evening looms large. Where precisely consists the pleasure to which we are so eagerly looking? As one's mind revolves the problem, one's body is borne in the spinning rickshaw through the glowing streets, till at last, after a long progress, the kurumaya turns into some quiet alley, and with a howl of annunciation, dashes up a little flagged yard to the door. Here is the "Palace of the Thousand New Delights." The portal is mighty and imposing, lit by pendent lanterns; on the outer step shoes are removed, preparatory to our advance over the shining floor of wood to the white mats of the guest-chamber. As we alight a crowd of little Elder Sisters throng to the door in welcome, with tiny cries of "Irasshai!" ("Come in!"). They prostrate themselves in civility. So we are conducted to our appointed room in which the feast is to be given. Up the steep stairway, and into a vast chamber, whose carpet is of many spotless mats. At the end is the alcove with its picture and

its flower. One wall is panelled with flat gold, on which is a conventional design. Over the vast expanse of the floor are grouped three or four fire-boxes, and the only other furniture of the swept and garnished place is a great screen of gilding and colours. Peacocks in azure, emerald, and opal strut and ruffle across its great six folds against a background of burnished gold. There is nothing else in the long, low room, whose outer wall is one range of sliding paper windows, opening onto a balcony. One compelling charm of a Japanese interior is the matchless perfection of its woodwork. The beams, joists, and all the wood employed is of precisely the adequate shape, size, and colour; every detail is so arranged as to combine into a most gracious artistic whole. In the scheme there is no symmetry, no repetition of form: the builder has wrought with a magnificent audacity of subtly juxtaposed lines, whose result is a complete and satisfying beauty. Look where you will, there are refinement, sensibility, and the full delicacy of personal imagination about every beam in roof or wall, about every exquisitely dovetailed joint, and every meticulously fitted contrivance of the beautiful woodwork.

Here in this room we pause. Meanwhile the other guests are arriving. Then enters with politeness our old friend, O Kami San herself. She smiles broadly and demands our wishes. O Kami San is a large and frog-like woman, in whose cunning old face,

wrinkled into a network of suggestively erotic smiles, it is hard to recognise the beauty that made her, in her far-off youth, the greatest and most adored geisha of the capital. Now Theodora is old; her occupation now is to send a younger world upon the beaten way of love, that she, in her beauty, once trod herself so well and faithfully. Now she keeps a tea-house, and with a profitable and intelligent kindliness watches from her heights of superior experience, the game of passion as played by a fresh generation. Kneeling, she offers the names of geisha to be summoned for the feast. We will have Mademoiselle Mille-couleurs, Miss Moonlit-foam, the Honourable Brilliance, and the Lady Little Willow Tree. Tragically, O Kami San explains that Moonlit-foam is prostrate with grief and swamped in tears, having a prior engagement which prohibits her from enjoying the honour of our delicious favour. In all probability, Miss Moonlit-foam is sitting only two rooms off, and delighting another audience with the unruffled gaiety of her many charms. We, however, request, in her stead, the company of Miss Pleasure-blossom, and O Kami San, having promised her, retires humbly to see the wine and the banquet served. We take our seats upon the cushions that Elder Sisters have set in a half-circle on the mats. We warm our hands over the fireboxes, then gradually, very gradually, food appears, borne apologetically by Elder Sisters, who kneel to enter the room,

and kneel again to depart. Come pale tea and little wafers in the shape and colour of leaves. Eventually, after an exhaustive pause (for the business of pleasure is made in Japan the occasion of no such feverish hurry as in England), the banquet proper arrives. A string of Elder Sisters troops in; each bears a tray of eatables and sets it before each visitor. There is raw fish in sliced slabs, with a pyramid of mayonnaise: there are soups confected cunningly with quails, or octopus, or molluscs. There are weird radishes, and evil-looking vegetables, and lobsters in every form and size conceivable. Henceforth the banquet moves on no ordered course. Fresh dishes appear casually, but the main mass of our dinner is before us. And in the midst is a basin with china phials of warm saké (whose flavour is of poor sherry, paraffin, and hot water), and if the feast aim at success there are also bottles of champagne. For the prudent dine before going to a tea-house, and where one cannot eat, time hangs heavy unless one can drink. Suddenly at the sliding door is a muffled stir. It slips open. There, kneeling on the threshold, are two delicious creatures—living jewels of colour—in vivid contrast to the sober greys and dull purples of the inferior Elder Sisters, our attendants. At the door they kneel, these visions, their heads bent low upon their hands. We can see the vandykes of their whitened napes above the bowed elaborate coiffure, lustrous and faultless,

with its coquetry of a dainty pin, or a rosy artificial flower, gemmed with a dewdrop. Then the new arrivals rise and shamble forward with radiant smiles and laughter, accepting our rapturous greeting with gay delight. These are *Mille-couleurs* and *Pleasure-blossom*. The rich brilliancy of their garments indicate that they are but *Maiko*—*geisha* so young and untried as to be beneath Japanese consideration. Yet to European taste they are merely precious and fascinating, these little dainty laughing love-birds. They are the frankest children, with the capricious self-confidence of a woman. They laugh, they flirt, they pout, their very passions have the candour of young innocence. They are amorously babyish. They sit by our side, eat peckingly, and set their scarlet lips to the champagne with flashes of laughter. They laugh dazzlingly at everything: at our compliments, at our jokes, at our manipulation of chopsticks. Their merriment has a clear ring of childish abandonment. Later creeps in the Honourable Brilliance, whose higher rank is marked by her sober garments. All sit talking, eating, rippling with gaiety. Then again the door slides open, and a quiet little figure is seen to kneel. She is dressed in the deepest and coldest blue, with a sash in cloth of silver. It is the Lady Little Willow Tree. She rises and draws near. The glories of the others, even of the adored Honourable Brilliance, pale and fade. She is daintily beautiful, with a smile of the

sweetest fascination, this little Willow Tree, graceful and appealing as her eponym. And her laughter, it has an almost intolerable beauty, as of a ringing glass. It is infinitely soft and gay, with a gentle note of appreciative reflection; it peals out in its exquisitely modulated cadences at every moment, and fills the heart of its evoker with a sense of rapture even more delicious than the pleasure given by its mere careless loveliness. For the rest her charm is of a wonderful bright tenderness, touched with the very faintest suggestion of sadness. Her manner seems to have more personal feeling, her eyes a more direct sympathy than those of the others. Her ways, too, have a gentle kindliness which wears the aspect of a personal liking. At our side she sits, allowing us the delight of her tiny roseleaf hand. She listens to our halting conversation in broken Japanese, to our stupid and oft-repeated compliments. At everything she smiles her dear little enigmatical smile, or laughs out with a trill of irresponsible and delighted amusement. She does not tire through all the evening. In human nature, she must be sick-weary of our tedious tautologies, but her aspect betrays only the most courteous and unselfconscious pleasure in our company. Her manner is exquisite in its perfect abnegation of self, which seems utterly unaware of any such abnegation. Her radiance of charm has an air of pure and delighted spontaneity. Such sweet

and unaffected selflessness, such perfection of consideration and tactful kindness, such a whole-hearted ambition to give happiness to others, with no memory of her own, sets the little geisha above the most elaborate ladies in the West. Her supremacy in delightful manners is absolute.

Meanwhile the feast advances in hilarity. The Honourable Brilliance is prevailed upon to dance. She rises and takes her place in the middle, flanked by the two Maiko. Willow Tree produces the samisen, strikes her chords, and breaks into the accompanying song. The music is long and sad; her voice trails with tragic intonations through its unintelligible length. It is a pitiful little voice that wails through the melody, to the pitiful sorrows of the samisen. And the Honourable Brilliance is dancing, with archaic poses and slow twistings of hand and foot. Her face, with its sweet sullenness, is set in a fixed rigidity of attention, from which no expression peeps. Her dainty grace of motion dominates the dance as she curves forth and back, under the merciless glare of the electric light. On either side the Maiko slowly wheel and flutter, with prescribed motions and occasional birdlike screeches, chiming in with the voice of Little Willow Tree. The Honourable Brilliance is a beautiful dancer, gracious with all the inviolable rules of movement that govern Japanese dances. But at last the time is over, and the three sink suddenly to the floor, with

heads bowed upon their hands. Then they return to sit and chatter, an amusement which they clearly prefer to the toil of those difficult evolutions. Now games succeed, or perhaps conjuring tricks are performed by two wee maidens in purple, with shrill little cries and tappings on a drum. Doves or fireworks are produced from unexpected places, and the twins favour us next with a *pas-de-deux*, whirling particoloured umbrellas in rhythmical solemnity. Or they act the mime of Daruma, the Holy Saint, who prayed so constantly that he wore away his legs, and henceforth prays for ever on his stumps. At last the geisha insist on games. They have a drinking catch, in which the victim at whom a bandaged person points in answer to a given question in the song, is to drink a cup of wine. Or another, in which a wand is passed, while a geisha, going outside, drums upon the shoji. The reveller in whose hand the wand rests at the moment when the drumming ceases is equally forced to drink. "Fox" is another game, and "Kompira, funé, funé," yet another —being a race upon the dividing lines of the mats, in which one runner is to meet the other without transgressing the rules. Then enters O Kami San, attended, in pale blue. She has been refreshing her thirsty soul, and now, inspired by wine, her brilliancy returns to her, and with weird grins and suggestions the reeling Theodora picks up her skirts and hops ponderously round in a spirited parody of

European dancing. Her once lovely voice is now uplifted in a vinous howl, and the waitresses (one of whom, herself the victim of an ill-starred love, has also been seeking an anodyne in the saké cup) raise a shrilling chorus of delighted and appreciative laughter. Finally, as the fateful hour approaches, all join hands, and—greatest joy of the geisha—whirl round and round in a ring to the lilt of “Auld Lang Syne,” till each tiny maiden subsides, a shapeless heap of brilliant draperies, into a corner of the room. So at last we take our departure, amid gentle entreaties from the Honourable Brilliance and Little Willow Tree that we will quickly come again. Being persons of discernment, we do : and again, and yet again.

### XIII

## SHIBA-NO-TERA : A JAPANESE TEMPLE SERVICE

TOKIO is a wide city of gardens and open places. Great jungle lands of wood and copse are the wild parks that are dotted across the capital. Shiba Park lies down towards the sea. It is a dense tangle of tall, spindly trees, through whose tumultuous crowd of thin stems the day glimmers fitfully upon the soundless earth. Broad roads pierce the twilight, and in an angle of one, near a moss-grown group of gods, who rule in a corner of green shadow, Viscount Mori, returning from Shiba Palace a few years ago, was attacked and murdered by a devoted Samurai for having sacrilegiously lifted with his stick, in the foregoing summer, the inviolable veil that hangs before the Holiest Place in the Shinto temples of Ise. The minister died, the murderer became a saint, though also, more properly, a martyr. To this day the crowd venerates his sanctity. In Shiba there are winding ways through the woodland, and a pool over whom hangs the mauve mist of wistaria. Deserting the highway, one may roam

through the intricacies of the forest, and, at last, between the great sun-dappled boles of prehistoric ilexes, go wandering up on to the topmost ridge of a monticule from whose summit the grey wildernesses of the city lie exposed. Straight down beneath our eyes, between the twisted trunks of the great camellia, whose heavy blooms take a rosy glare in the sunlight against their dark and sullen leaves, stretch like a map the courts, shrines, precincts, chapels, chantries, memorials, mortuaries, the priestly buildings, the great bell, and the vast mass of the main Temple of Shiba.

The state entrance of the temple is from the broad road that runs below. A gigantic portal, towering and top-heavy, of scarlet wood, massive among the tall firs, leads in, up the steps, and between the tormented malice of the Ni-o (the two devil-gods of a faith conquered before history was born, and now enslaved to the guardianship of the temples that overthrew them) into the first court of the temple. From this one passes through others, and through others, and through others endlessly, each forested with high toro or statue-lanterns, which increase in value from court to court, until we attain the magnificent works of bronze and iron towards the approach to the temple itself. Each enclosure is pierced by gates and screens of carved wood enamelled with all the Japanese prodigality of gold and colour in holy service. Wonderful birds,

phœnixes, and peacocks flutter and gleam through jungles of enormous peonies, or tangled boughs of plum and cherry, immortalised in an exquisite immobility of luxuriant line.

But, if we prefer, we can ignore the vast courts and forecourts of the main entrance with their pomp and their pebbled expanses. Instead, one can descend straight upon the temple from the little hill behind, brushing one's way through heavy glories of blossom. Through cherries, camellias, and golden kerria the footpath drops steeply down into the precinct. All around and over the holy enclosures the towering pines of Japan twist and wave their wealth of plumage; and, in the courts of the Buddha, the cherry floats as a rosy mist of the morning, above whose drifts of shell-pink vapour stand like islets dark masses of fir, bent and bound cunningly into prescribed eccentricities of shape.

When April is yet young the great temple-tomb is in high festival for the Birthday of the Saviour. Its alleys are strung with lanterns, and outside its gate a bustling fair proceeds all along the streets. One passes through the yards behind the shrine, and beneath the eyes of a small Shaka-Buddha, whose compelling grace of smile remains a blessed memory of the Comforter who led the way to the Everlasting Peace ; and so to the steps of the temple. Like most Japanese shrines, this is of enormous size. Its walls are low, and down upon them curls, in a terrific wave,

the swooping mass of the roof, whose topmost beam, marked with the crest of Tokugawa, stands unapproachably far up against the melting blue of the sky. Although this beetle-browed scheme of architecture lacks in graciousness, majesty, or refined beauty of line, yet the sheer, hulking enormity, the brutal, threatening massiveness of its construction give a Japanese temple an awful and crushing impressiveness entirely its own, owing nothing to delicacy of invention, and all to its lumpish immensity. It frowns down upon the worshipper, it towers over him with its menacing bulk, its appalling roof seems to crush the very existence of man. The scheme is thoroughly religious, if religion aim at teaching man the paltriness of life instead of its importance. Under the eaves of a great temple mortal affairs are dwarfed to insignificance by the looming shadow of the mass whose impending bulk clamours to heaven the might, the overwhelming dominion of those vast forces beside which the uttermost achievement of the mortal world is but as the cheeping of a mouse among the Alps. The crude heaviness of a Japanese temple compels reverence by the simple weight of its presence.

Upon the steps stand priests in robes of glittering gold brocades, to direct the white-socked worshipper to the main door. Round under the eaves runs a verandah, whose surface is of polished wood. Its inner wall is fired by glimpses of sunlight into a

blaze of gold, azure, emerald, amethyst. Each face, each angle of the wall is moulded, carved, and gilded with all the wealth of the world. Shafts of sunlight strike from time to time upon the high angles of this cool avenue of shade, where the colours gleam dimly in the luminous twilight. Then suddenly flashes out a high column or sharp turn of wall whose sides gleam up into the scented darkness of the roof with a glory of golden workmanship. Waves run rippling in sapphire, lions and fantastic beasts writhe and mouth in carven gold. Gorgeous blossoms flaunt along the cornice, wrought faithfully and enamelled in colours more softly brilliant than Nature ever wore. Everywhere, in every glimpse of light that shoots through the fretted outer screen and diapers the wall with a pattern of shadow, flames gold and gold and gold. Gold in flat sheets, in massive mouldings, in carvings, in patterns, overlaid with jewels of green and scarlet and black and purple, everywhere dazzling in the sumptuousness of its glory, nowhere tyrannous or oppressive with a blatant glare of wealth. In every space the opulent riot of colour with which it is relieved and enriched gives a magnificence of variety which would avert the sin of exaggeration even were not its own pure softness of note enough. So one passes through the glimmering shadows of the verandah, over the noiseless wood, with its mats, to the door of the cathedral.

Within, the eye loses itself in the indefinite per-

spective of pillars, black and gold, which wander away interminably into the uttermost darknesses. The whole vast hall is crowded with the devout. The outer part is railed off by a wooden barrier, without which are massed the lay worshippers—men, women, and children, squatting or standing, smiling, and even chattering. Here is a group of little girls, gorgeous in colours; further on a knot of ancient women follow the service, or a posy of geisha beam happily upon the world. In the chancel are arrayed the priests, in close ranks. They are of every rank, of every variety of glory. Their copes form, in the faint light, the effect of the east window of Châtres—a dim mist of kaleidoscopic splendours. One is of crocus-coloured brocade, flamed with a metallic sheen; another of hyaline, with strange blue lights; a third of mellow dove-colour, whose folds take gleams of iridescence like a pearl in the twilight of the sea. Their patterns stray across the dense mass of colour in a tangle of diverse wonders. Over one cope great flames go wandering in an ordered, yet delirious design. Another is webbed with a network of purple; some are starred with many blossoms, or bejewelled with patches of fresh tints. Birds are woven into the fabric, or flowers, or delicate designs of curve and circle. The tenderest, freshest colours melt and harmonise with the strongest, the sternest violets, emeralds, dull crimson, or old gold. Some copes are rich and splendid as summer; others have the young

exquisiteness of spring or a dewy dawn. Some have the glory of an opulent sunset, and some the softness of a pale sunrise over the sea. Everywhere, throughout this dense crowd of prelates, the full wonder and range of Japanese invention is seen in the unparalleled loveliness of each vestment that the ages have accumulated in the temple coffers.

The service proceeds. The Rubric is, of course that which Christianity borrowed from the worship of the Buddha so many centuries ago, and is, therefore, no stranger to the devout Anglican. Our holy Church, too, adapted the Buddhist vestments and emblems. So here in the Buddhist cathedral we see recognisable mitres, copes, rochets, stoles, and all the other paraphernalia of Christian worship. At the head of the chancel, overhung with a curtain of rich rose wrought heavily with gold, stands the cloudy gloom of the Holy Place. The high altar is crowned with vases and with lighted tapers in decreasing rank from the vast waxen columns on the largest candlesticks ; the air is sleepy with incense, and behind the Holy Table smiles down out of the dimness the sweet face of Amida-Buddha enthroned above the world and the years in an eternity of divine benevolence. Remote and very august he looms behind the altar in the gloom, and the flickering gleam of the candles reveals from instant to instant the loveliness of his smile, dreamy through the drifting vapours of incense. Meanwhile a slow psalm rises and floats up

into the dark invisibility of the roof. The priests sing in chorus. Then arises from his throne an aged archbishop in scarlet and cloth-of-gold that sweeps behind him in splendour. He is mitred and in full pontificals. Before and behind him go his attendant prelates, bearing the emblems. Acolytes follow his tottering march from throne to lectern. There, in pale tones, tremulous with age, he reads out the appointed scripture. The misty softness of a muffled gong sounds dimly. Then, over his head, break the crashing glories of an anthem, as he sinks upon his knees. A bishop, standing, from his place intones a litany of long, tragic music, and, at its end, a second scarlet-and-gold archbishop descends the throne upon which he has sat immobile, and, to the high music of another chant, sweeps round to the lectern, vacated now by his predecessor, and there, holding before him the sacred whisk, lifts up his voice to the multitude. So the stately service continues its measured course of holiness.

And all this to the honour of a proud family whose fall was the crash of the dam letting in upon Japan the flood of Western innovation. For here, in their quiet chapels, lie lapped in vermillion the great regents of the House of Tokugawa, who for so long held Japan in so iron and absolute a slavery. The temple stands for the worship of their glorified souls, and in rich, small chapels on the flank of the hill their bodies lie resting, each in its tomb-shrine. They

are not all here. Some of their family lie over at Ueno, and the founders of their greatness, Ieyasu and Iyemitsu, sleep far away in the remote mountains, in the holy calm of the pine woods that clothe Nikko. The pride of the House of Tokugawa is fallen now and vanished. Its last prince, the de-throned Shogun of Japan, drags out a life of wealthy and inglorious honour in the south, coming from time to time to do reverence to the Emperor, whom his grandfathers held bound in a bitter bondage of poverty for three hundred years. But still, under the very brows of the imperial palace, where the Emperor and his followers pretend to worship the Shinto shadows, the vast foundation of the Buddha is crowded gorgeously with the thronging piety that gives worship to the spirits of the ancient fallen line. Here, under the hill and among the pines, are holy the souls of the great dead. It is as if, under Edward III., St. Paul's had been annually devoted to a service of glorification for Mortimer and Isabel. Emperors come and go, with their phantom creed, but the House of Tokugawa is enshrined and honoured for ever in the heart of Japan. And over their souls the love of the Buddha extends its hallowing majesty to this day, and for many days to come.

## XIV

### ASAKUSA-NO-TERA

LONG, very long ago, in the misty days of the world's youth, the gracious Lady K'an-Yin was a queen in the East. She lived for peace and mercy, and her ways were everywhere blessed. From life to life had she passed towards the glory of the end, following always in the footsteps of the Sacred Ones, the Buddhas humble and holy. So, at last, the Lady K'an-Yin achieved the sanctification of perfection, and there was in her left no spot of mortal frailty. The heart of God was thrown wide for her reception, and the Everlasting Peace was the prize of her merit. But our Lady of Mercy remembered earth, its sins and its sorrows, its conflicts and desires ; its men and women who suffer and hope and despair. She gazed back through all the vista of her lives, and had sorrow for the heavy sorrow of the soul's long wandering towards the Eternal Rest. And there came upon her a grief that she, in the fulness of her peace, should be set so far away from the earth she had served, and be throned too high any more to show love or help to the wayward and the despairing

upon their pilgrimage. So, before the eyes of the Blessed Ones, the Lady K'an-Yin laid aside the crown of her glory, and, of her own compassion, stood outside the gates of Nirvana, refusing the completion of her Buddhahood ; her face is turned in pity towards the world, and throughout all ages the Queen of Mercy sets the comfort and the salvation of men above her own that she earned so fully in the bygone years. She denied herself for her loving-kindness towards man, and now, K'an-Yin Bodhisat, she looks out for ever across the sound of mortal prayer, and takes between her tender hands tenderly the bruised and stained blossoms that are the lives of men. Gently she heals the wounded petals, and with the Water of Life she refreshes their fading vigours. The broken heart of man she lays softly against the divine peace in hers, and sends at last upon its way in new hope and comfort. There is nothing so little or frail or sinful, that is little or frail or vile in the sight of Our Lady of Pity ; there is no life so feeble, so worthless, so humble that she does not bend her smile upon it, and, with the gracious majesty of her comfort, pluck up its courage to face the Holy Way, and rouse its faith again with the message of the Eternal Mercy. She takes many forms, but in all she is the sweet and tender Mother of the Bleeding Heart. To the East she is Madonna : Mary, mother, the glorified tenderness of womanhood, or that older mother of whom Mary is but the shadow, the Lady of Life and

Death, "who gathers all things mortal, in cool, immortal hands." K'annon Bosats' is the need incarnate that the world has always felt for the tenderness that mothers give, but grown men, in the rough ways of life, cease to regard. Yet not the hardest of grown men ever, in his inmost heart, outgrows the little child. Throughout the nations he imagines and adores a deified mother whose pity stands between her children and the ferocity of those gloomy gods whom the younger religions of the West have set up in place of the old. K'annon Bosats', with her sweetness and renunciation, is Isis, is Ashtaroth, is Demeter-Persephassa, is Mary, the Star of the Sea. In her hands she takes the wretched, fluttering prayers of men, and bears them up to the high throne of heaven, whither their own strength, their poor little clogged wings of selfishness, could never bring them. And there, the Holy Ones, who stand behind the Great Laws, and are deaf to the follies of prayer, smile upon the pitiful Lady, and have so much love for her and her offices of mercy, that far down on the earth they who have prayed find grace doubled within their hearts, and in their new courage go bravely on the Way, imagining that for their single, puny case the Buddhas have diverted all the machinery by which the Great Laws move. So men bless the Holy Mother, carrying to her their prayers, and, in the faith which their belief gives, find a fresh strength and hope which seem to them the answer to

their prayers, and the result of a divine miracle wrought by intercession and entreaty.

Throughout the East K'annon-Sama is adored. She is kind and tolerant and popular. At Kamakura stands one of her holy shrines ; but another and more famous is in Tokio, far out at Asakusa. In the capital she has other temples, indeed, but at Asakusa her precinct has a more than ordinary celebrity, owing to the eccentricities of its maintenance. The enclosure is of enormous size, embracing temples and shows and pagodas, and half a hundred other attractions. But the whole place is too worldly and bustling for the calm and peaceful deity in whose honour it is founded. Alone of all Japanese shrines that of Asakusa resembles the Temple of Jerusalem in the days of Pilate. One wonders that a great Buddha does not come to do for this shrine as another did for that Jewish "den of thieves." The place is crowded with them that buy and sell, and the broad park is arid and dusty with the stir of passing crowds. The temple-court is thronged with sweet-sellers, cake-sellers, prophets, and witches ; old women keep stalls of captive insects and birds, as in the holy place of Jerusalem. But the end, indeed, is different here. For the worshipper buys these birds, not for sacrifice, but for release. In the eyes of all the Buddhas it is a pleasant and good thing to give life and happiness ; whoever does thus acquires merit. The Buddhas take delight in mercy ; not, like the

gloomy Moloch whom Christianity has adopted from Judaism, in doom and sacrifice, and the smell of things slaughtered. But even so, the presence of these haggard crones, higgling over a farthing for the merit you are to win by releasing a bird, is out of place and inharmonious in the precinct of the quiet K'annon. Much more so are all the other merchants and pedlars and hucksters, whose gaudy little booths line every roadside in the enclosure. Here everything comes to market—baubles and lanterns and cakes, and all manner of other ephemeral delights. The air is raucous with the dusty clamourings of the crowd. The temple itself is a babel of self-seekers, where the vulgarest and most selfish forms of belief come thronging to justify themselves. The interior is large, but haunted by a desolating atmosphere of dirt. A trail of dust and squalor seems to lie over all the multifarious decorations and offerings with which it is so incongruously crowded. The Eastern Mary, as well as the Western, has her frightful tribute of ex-votos, crude and vulgar signs of a crude and vulgar faith that only leaps to light under the stress of an accidental escape from peril, whose credit is promptly ascribed to some miraculous diversion of the laws of nature. So dirty tablets depend everywhere from the walls of K'annon Sama, among blurred old pictures and grimy relics. The hall is crowded in the unclean darkness with miracle-working statues and all the apparatus of cheap mys-

ticism. In front of the wired screen that protects the high altar is a vast wooden coffer, with bars across it. Into this we throw some money: and then, but not till then, does the worshipper approach the Lady of Mercy with prayer. The whole service of Asakusa is depressing and evil. It forms no part of genuine Japanese religion. It is a mere St. Audrey's Fair. Candles gutter and stink on the altar behind the grating of wire, and a dreary air of indifference pervades the sanctuary. And through the gloom troop riotous crowds of worshippers coming to chaffer for some charm at one of the booths whose traffic is in things sacred, or purchasing blessings eternal for a tuppence in a screw of paper. The whole temple has the desolating aspect of a mart—a Stock Exchange, where shares in the unlimited Company of Heaven are vigorously bought and sold. No one seems to care for the temple, nor to regard the gentle holiness of its Lady. Here the folk come on a jaunt, to picnic, to invest an odd halfpenny or so in a chance for a seat in Paradise. The place is thick with irreverent hubbub, the dust of crowds, and the dirt of neglect; with the acrid odour of sweat mingling, under the dark arcades of the shrine, with the tallowy noisesomeness of the temple smells. The place is a jangle of discordancies. Not here, indeed, is worshipped the sweet and peaceful K'annon, whose dominion is over sorrow and despair. The temple of Asakusa is recognised as no true temple, but

rather as a place for junketing and jollifications of every sort.

The whole precinct, the whole park, is abandoned to booths and peepshows. Broad ways of gravel meander round the islets of jungle yellowed with irreverent and unquiet dust. The shores of these arid rivers are fringed with incessant stalls and stances of them that buy and sell. Toys are the dominant merchandise: there are toys in a thousand kinds—paper butterflies that flutter up to heaven, or plaster kittens, or contrivances of tissue and silk that occupy swinging exhibitions where tiny fantasies float from strings, and balance in the light air. Then there are gourds for bottles, in the weirdest shapes, and sweetmeats, and fans, gilt or silvered, and goldfish with innumerable tails. The park is riotous with the voice of rejoicing. It is the dusty Rosher-ville of Japan: beneath the immovable sun perspiring multitudes throng upon their clacking errands of pleasure, through shrine and courts, across wildernesses of sand, and down the gaping river-beds of the roadways. A little further, gongs, tumultuous in the sullen heat, announce tea-houses and restaurants, where gaudy girls, smiling with scarlet lips, allure the festive. Also there are theatres, waxworks, all the inventions of decent pleasure. Behind the temple lies a menagerie. Here lives a bald elephant, who does tricks; several morose and somnolent bears; a few mangy specimens of the great cats;

sea-birds, otter, and apes in infinite variety. In unobtrusive corners are secluded goats, rabbits, cows, and other rare but uninteresting animals. In front of every important creature is a stool supporting slices of unappetising cagmag, with a pointed pole of bamboo. On payment of a farthing one is entitled to skewer a portion on the pole and offer it to the captive. If he be a bear, he accepts it with a sulky and entirely ungrateful avidity; any overtures to the better-bred felines result merely in a display of exaggerated boredom. Lion or tiger humps himself, yawns, and manifests an elaborate and offended indifference. Beyond these again is a booth where half a million holy personages, rendered in clay, squat in a galaxy of ugliness. Then follows an exhibition of the Forty-seven Ronin, all precisely alike, seven inches in height, and decorated with the same expression of blank ferocity.

But the chief glories of Asakusa are the tableaux in wax. These have a traditional authority. For the temple owes its foundation to an exiled nobleman, who, being reduced to dire straits of poverty, was brought to fishing for a livelihood. But in his labours he merely succeeded in netting a small golden image of the Blessed K'annon. This portent recurred and recurred, till at last the fisherman decided to build a temple at the nearest spot available. This done, he prospered ever after. And now here is the noble, immortalised in wax, fishing up,

with a crystallised air of amazement, the sacred image. Follow other tableaux of endless variety and vivacity. Lovely empresses and courtesans go robed and decked most gloriously. Holy saints are assaulted vainly by the most convincing hairy devils ; great princes do foul murder upon their enemies, while waxen beauties smile across the scene ; a hero defies an abominable beaked sorceress, who flies away through the air with a snarl of malevolence, leaving a bloody arm in her enemy's possession. Then we come to a model of a modern Atlantic liner, hideously perfect. Then into a garden, with inferior bushes and stunted trees in pots. There is also a European theatre for marionettes, and a pool where moulting water-birds disport themselves in a drooping manner. There is no end to the entertainments of Asakusa.

Another broad way leads back to the main entrance of the precinct. Thence the approach lies down a close avenue of shops to the street. In these shops are bought delicious inventions—complete Japanese houses with wee installations of furniture, perfect to the smallest utensil : devil-masks, in which mummers dance at the New Year ; tiny pots, simulating a jar incrusted by long abandonment in the depths of the sea. Their flanks are furred with the salted crust, and about their riven sides meander the pale pink arms of octopus, in a writhing realism of horrid invention. Then there

are shops filled with toys, with cosmetics, with devices of feminine decoration. At last we come to the street, and pass beneath the portico of enormous lanterns into the noisy vitality of Tokio. But we have not seen any true worship of the Blessed K'annon. Her holiness takes refuge in quieter places, and in the sad hearts, heavy-laden and weary, that her love has lightened of their burden. In the broken and the contrite heart is the true shrine of K'annon Sama.

## XV

### UYENO-NO-TERA

U YENO is a rich park which plumes a hill above Tokio. In the old gorgeous days it commanded a peaceful suburb, but now it is become a mere islet in the roaring tide of civilisation. Around its steep shores go foaming the whirlpools of electric tramways, and the cataclysm of civilisation reverberates against its holy cliffs. In the forgotten days it was an acropolis of peace—a green citadel of rest rising far away from the storms of the capital. But now the disease of urbanity has eaten away the last quiet lands till the high ground of divine peace has been captured and harassed into forming a nucleus for modern life. Its heights are crowded with museums and exhibitions, and all the treacherous displays by which a nation seeks passionately to attest its own degeneration. The site of Uyeno is commanding and glorious. The road winds upwards on to the hill above the great Lotus-pool of Benten Sama. From the slopes far away against the scarlet flare of sunset the wanderer may see, black and awful

above the serried roofs of Tokio, the low, long, inexorable curves of Fuji-san, from this point more clearly menacing, less augustly divine than from any other view. The pool itself is a phantom of beauty, across whose grey horizon of fretted roofs looms far away the watchful presence of the Doom. The sunset dyes the water among the great leaves and blossoms with a crimson whose glare is only the prophecy of another and more awful light to be cast in the great day of ultimate destruction. The road swiftly mounts the hill above the lake, with its promontory and temples, towards the wooded summit. Passing the exhibitions and museums, one comes at last to the level plateau of the hill's crown. Here, among the blushing clouds of cherry-blossom, is a monstrously hideous image of Amida, with scarlet mouth and hideous smile. This colossus is of recent date, and its blasphemous horror is therefore the less unpardonable. The crown of the eminence is devoted to the tomb-temples. These hold a space looking out over Tokio. Here, such of the Shoguns as are not buried at Shiba or at Nikko, sleep in vigilance over their capital. A high stone gate of ritualistic form leads into the precinct, along a flagged pavement among the pines, whose heavy verdure thickens the gloom of Uyeno. Along the pavement in the sacred darkness troop little groups of motley colours to do honour to the Regents dead. Fathers and mothers, clad in greys and blacks, bring their babies,

in blue and scarlet and orange, to worship at the tombs.

The flickering sunlight among the pine trees attaches a factitious holiness to the atmosphere surrounding these dead rulers. They seem to sleep amid a quiet peace of gold and emerald, such as reigns in the untroubled calms of the sea. The heavy atmosphere of green and gold which laps the graves of the Uyeno Tokugawas seems to envelop the sepulchres with a placid sacrosanctity of calm. The tombs are embedded among the peaceful green growths of countless ages. Museums, exhibitions, displays are here as frequent as they are tiresome and unconvincing. But the hill is holy merely to the souls of the Tokugawa Shoguns. In Japan little else matters ; on Uyeno, nothing. Well and profitably may one leave all the disastrous symptoms of culture, to meditate over the temple shrines.

Deep in the mossy shade they lie, these tombs, amid the golden lustre of sparse sunshine through the boughs. Here are pagodas and chapels and chantries. Once there stood here the glories of a high Cathedral, dominant over a township of priests, bishops, and deacons. For this foundation the genius of the Tokugawas had the tact to appoint, as mitred and sovereign abbot, some prince of imperial birth, whose place was exalted on the steps of the throne. Thus they had a divine prince for high priest of the Tokugawa worship, and also, in

the event of any revolution on the part of the captive Emperor at Kioto, the ruling family had in its power to proclaim another prince of imperial stock to be Emperor in place of the rebellious potentate deposed and retired into a monastery. So, however each Emperor might groan under the Tokugawa régime, he shrank from revolt, feeling that any insubordination would not only fail to achieve his own emancipation, but would also succeed only in establishing upon a useless throne another puppet of the imperial stock. In the final revolution the last move of the Shogun's adherents was to carry off the Mi-ya, or Imperial Abbot of Uyeno, with a view to declaring him Emperor of Japan in opposition to the candidate of the rebels—the present Emperor, Mutsuhito. The attempt failed, the resistance of the regnant Shogun collapsing in the face of foreign intervention and the internal jealousies of the Houses of Choshiu and Satsuma. The forces of the Shogunate made their last stand upon the hill of Uyeno, and the victory of the party who claimed to be fighting for the Emperor was signalled by the conflagration that destroyed the great cathedral, whose grandeur has left no trace. The splendour of the old régime vanished from Uyeno in wreaths of smoke and fire. Nothing is left but the tombs and the precinct and the stone lanterns. Of the cathedral not one ash is left upon another. Nothing of all Japan's sacrifices to posterity is so bitterly regret-

table as the holocaust that offered up to the future the scented arcades, the gold, the immemorial holiness of the vast abbey whose gilded roofs and wealthy corridors had so long been among the splendours of Uyeno. The monks are fled, and the abbot of imperial blood no longer thrones among the pines of Uyeno. The old order has passed, giving place to one prosaic, unreverent, and altogether profitless. Indeed the temples of Uyeno are shorn of their glory, and the hill on which their relics stand is high with dust of beauties destroyed by the passionate vulgarities of a civil war based upon family jealousy. Bitterly, bitterly must one deplore those intemperate flames of sedition that dissolved into the shame of heaven the courts and shrines of Tokugawa that so long had been the splendour of earth. The result is that now of Japan's creations the temples of Shiba are probably the loveliest (those of Nikko had long indeed the reputation, being open to the public many years before those of the capital), whereas, if all reports be true, the tombs and shrines of Uyeno, among the fir trees on the hill, must once have been among the most gorgeous in the East—during those long centuries when the abbey was rich with glory and gilding, having an imperial prince for sovereign abbot, and the nobles of Japan for monks in the most august sanctuary of the kingdom. And, even to this day, the holiness of the vanished foundation continues in some mutilated measure. The Abbot of

Uyeno has an authority, a sacrosanctity above other prelates, even though his power be nothing now compared to that of his predecessors, when every wearer of the mitre was also a divine prince.

But gone indeed are the glories of Tokugawa, and the high abbey of Uyeno, with its courts, and its cathedral, and its palaces, gone up to heaven in smoke. There remain but the pagoda, and the tombs with their shrines. The interior of a Japanese temple-tomb is full of authority. The building is a vast rectangle, whose vaults are rich with gilding, and the floor of the softest white matting. The walls are pillared and fretted with gold and half a hundred colours. Their beauty is subdued by the quiet light admitted through the outer blinds of the verandah. Within broods a depth of dim, warm darkness, through which the gold or emerald of the decoration gleams fitfully in the perfumed twilight. The roof, the ceiling-beams, the corbels, are enriched by an infinite diversity of design ; birds, beasts, and flowers, carved and painted by the most famous painters of their time, riot along the shadows. The opulent variety of colour and splendour is beyond description, almost beyond appreciation. The upper roof, in its tangle of golden haze, is a jungle of marvellous lights and flashes of gold through a glorified mist of line and form. The whole vast interior is filled and suffused with a husky atmosphere of gold, in whose recesses and upper nooks of darkness gleam

mosaics of azure and amethyst. But colour is not the dominant note of the interior. The dominant note is the glow of shadowy gilding that pervades the whole. The interior is aflame with hot gold, mellowed by the ages. The sun beats passionately in upon the heat of gilding and enamel, but his fire falls upon the flames and jewels of colour with a soft radiance softened again by the outer blinds of reed and the high, dim walls of fragrance within. The floor beneath exhales a ghostly radiance of mellow gold. The whole interior of a great temple is filled with a pulsating note of yellow from the sunlight and the matting. Each reverberates the waves of calm colour from the incessant fire of each arcade and column. Dimness reflects light, and light dimness, in an intoxicating fertility of autumnal glory. The inner light is very holy, very religious, very overpowering, very corrupting in the sensuous softness of its modulations. The warm and gleaming glamour is only intensified by the discreetly aphrodisiac influences of high shadow and cool recesses of shade, where the heats of life gather fresh vehemence from their artificial and encouraging discouragement.

The great hall of a temple is a place of subdued yet dominant lights cast by the sun through the outer lattices. It flickers with clear and brilliant purity. Its inner surface is of flat and passionate gold, whose wealth sends out a dull glare in the splendid gloaming. On the gilded panels of the

inmost wall of the rectangle monstrous beasts writhe and sprawl, whereas on the three outer ranges of trellis are carved by great but lesser artists the frenzy of luscious boughs and the screaming flight of birds through brakes of silver thorn. The floor is coolly golden with matting in the half light, whose tones take a new wealth in the golden dusk of afternoon. Along the inner wall are ranged tall banners of lacerated brocade and wonderful lecterns of lacquer, with their scriptures, and vast drums. And this inner wall (one must call it so, as it runs at right angles to the inmost sanctuary, while the other three open upon the outer world) is cut half-way by the chancel. Following up through the gilded alley one comes to the Holy Place. In some temples the Holy Place suggests at once the Brompton Oratory and a fancy fair. The Blessed Tables are arranged as a square whose fourth side is lacking. On the tables are marvellously embroidered altar-cloths, patens, chalices, vases, candlesticks—all the details of Christian worship, and many other religious toys in a crowd. The walls are violent with gilding, and across their panels of famous decoration go drifting sleepily wreaths of incense from the wrought bronze censers on the altar. . . . Here the light is altogether low and holy, with occasional glimmerings in the sacred twilight to overwhelm the worshipper with a sense of the sanctity to which he has been allowed to penetrate. On the Blessed Table are many other

adornments—huge lotuses, modelled in gold and bronze, with nodding leaves and buds and flowers; Buddhas, Amidas, Shakas, Miroküs; tabernacles, being precious simulacra of the actual tombs in which the dead are buried in the shrines outside. These miniature chapels bristle with gold and ornament; they are set upon the High Altar to render honour to the Buddhas for the Shogun whose true sepulchres they imitate faithfully in little. Candles flicker in the heavy-scented dusk of this Holy of Holies. A dim weight of sanctity oppresses the inmost darkness. Gold, lacquer, enamel, brocade, are here heaped up for worship of the glorified dead. The impression becomes terrific at last of shadowy presences enthroned in the gloom of that shadowy chapel. All around there is the prodigality of wealth and art, with the heavy suggested domination of death. Not the most ribald could keep his crude nerve among the tremendous good and evil presences who fill the mortuary sanctuaries of Shiba and Uyeno. The atmosphere belongs only to the eternal, and to them who have sense of the eternal. The dark sense of dominant presences is not confined merely to the shrine. It pursues the reverent out into the very woods, whose ponderous glory of green and gold seems voiceless and attentive for the utterance of some tremendous phantom haunting the precinct. The whole enclosure is full of the great dead. It is only a place for the perceptive. The stupid would

find here nothing but sheer terror. So, from the dancing lights of Uyeno woods, one returns through the streets of Tokio, deserting the quiet land of the dead for the clamorous sea of the living. But, up on that hill of tombs and firs, one leaves a very placid colony of the living, whose life is for everlasting.

## XVI

### NORTHWARD

AT last the time comes for our long-deferred expedition to the northern island of Japan, the Hokkaido. On the destined day we sally forth to the station, attended by Wataguchi. Under the glazed arcades are gathered expectant crowds. For the Japanese has the itch of travel, and flocks gaily about the country by every possible train. He, his wife, and family, go touring with a cheerfulness unhampered by portmanteaux. He is clothed in rustling silks, and is crowned by a large flopping felt hat. In one hand he brandishes an umbrella, and in the other a small bag fashioned from a gaudy piece of carpet. After him follows his little quiet wife in blue or grey, hatless, with her black, glossy hair swelled into wonderful rolling puffs. Both go tottering upon wooden clogs. Babies in different shades of brilliancy keep her mildly busy.

Meanwhile, until the train has made up its mind to start, the appointed platform is guarded against all invaders by incorruptible ticket-collectors, who forbid

entrance by the wickets. Suddenly, however, on the jangling of a discordant bell from somewhere, each gate is thrown wide, and with a convulsive heave the flooding crowd rolls forward. After the press has won through the stiles out on to clear ground once more, is heard at last the patten song. For, as men and women troop down the platform, their clogs upon the concrete pavement raise a strangely musical tinkle of sound, whose harmony chimes in with the rhythmic motions of a crowd. And so, to the patten-music, with its effect of water rippling over pebbles whose vibrations have a clear ring, the travellers advance to the train and choose their places.

By her husband's side the wife climbs up on to the seat, tucks her white-socked feet under her, arranges her draperies, and composes herself in patience. On the floor stand the clogs, neatly slipped off and left. The husband meanwhile is making purchases through the window from some itinerant vendor of cold saké in lemonade bottles; of hot tea in pots, twisted cakes or innocent-looking buns, which prove to be stuffed with the cloying nastiness of bean-paste. The humours of a British railway station exist only on a very much modified scale, and even so are mainly owing to the British element. Here, upon the thronging third-class passengers on the platform, darts suddenly a pious but scandalising Scotchwoman, with crimson hair and the stature of Anak; she proceeds ardently to distribute from the inevitable black handbag

small tracts and godly leaflets in Japanese, much to the irritation of a Roman Catholic nun, who stands aloof, surveying the scene with unmistakable peevishness. As for the Japanese, while common sense forbids them to burden their minds with such a matter, yet politeness equally prohibits the rudeness of refusal. Accordingly they accept with the graceful external civility of the East, and then allow the leaflets to glide placidly to the ground from between their idle fingers. With a grim smile of satisfaction the nun follows the missionary into the train. All is now ready for departure, when suddenly a stir makes itself felt, and down the platform, attended by many officials in bulging frock-coats, comes a high dignitary of the Church. He is of gracious appearance—a frail man with curling black beard and large dark eyes, full of kindness. His robe is of rich black brocade, over another of the palest lavender silk, and his attire is a bonnet of horsehair, within which his topknot is enshrined. He is followed by archdeacons and chaplains in flowing vestments of black. Wata-guchi steps obsequiously out of the way, and into our carriage mounts the bishop. After him troops his escort, clerical and lay. The chaplains attend to his requirements. The archdeacons settle his robes around him as he squats benignly upon the seat. Then the frock-coated officials stand before him and bow with ceremonious reverence and indrawings of the breath. Their respects duly paid, they back out

on to the platform and form up in line outside the windows; then, amid their humble bowings, the train glides slowly from the station. Wataguchi is left, waving after us with smiles of the friendliest cheerfulness.

The journey to the far north is long, and the train stops at very nearly every station, where, on the platforms, are hawkers of teapots and of small, flat wooden boxes containing rice and fish and condiments. Gradually the day wears down toward evening as the train rushes over the flat tracts of rice with which the plain of Tokio is filled. Very far away in the blue haze stands the rugged mass of Nantaisan, rising on the horizon like a vapour of sapphire. The sun of afternoon slants long, golden rays upon the waving green of the fields, and on the heavy plumage of pine and ilex that from time to time marks the precinct of some little temple. Occasionally glimpses may be had of the great avenue of cryptomerias that shadowed the last journey of Iyeyasu from his tomb at Shidzuoka to his final resting-place at Nikko. On the day of his burial they were but a promise; now, after three hundred years, their double row is a stern line of darkness across the country, though broken and thinned by the importunities of time and storm. Now and then the train sweeps across deserted tracts, with reeded pools where deep blue irises wave, or among low copses, one rolling flame of azalea, or again through

a tiny quiet village, drowsy among the purple-blossomed Paulownias.

While still the sun is hot, a catastrophe occurs. At one station had got into our carriage a prosperous-looking gentleman, armed with a lunch-basket, from which protruded the neck of a beer-bottle. He sat comfortably in the sun, and was content to spare the bottle. At last he reaches the end of his journey, and prepares to descend upon some dusty little platform. As he opens the door a sudden explosion shatters the air. After a horrid pause for collection of our intellects, we understand the cause of the tragedy, and its full extent; for that beer-bottle, warmed by the kindly sun, had felt its spirits so strangely excited as to need a vent. Accordingly it had expelled its cork, followed by a vast body of foaming fluid, full into the face of the bishop. There sits that saintly prelate, dripping like the Anadyomene. For a moment the benevolence of his expression is clouded by a not unnatural surprise. Then he catches our eye, and through the amber rain he smiles upon us. A good man, and of an untroubled temper! But, as for the innocent perpetrator, who shall depict the stony aspect of his horror, as he realised the sacrilege? Without one word said, as soon as he recovered from his trance of astonishment, he leapt from the carriage and fled. The bishop endeavoured to dry his face, and continued to smile at our air of amused concern. But the archdeacons

arose in wrath, and at their exclamations the chaplains came running from an inferior compartment. With tender piety they disrobed their superior and removed the soaking brocade. There he sat with his look of kindly intelligence, in the pearly colours of his silken undergarment, while his attendants gently wiped his face, his hair, his girdle. Gradually the excitement of the priests subsided, and the bishop resumed the meditations from which he had been so violently torn.

It was evening before the train emerged from the flat lands into the wild hills through which the railway goes toward Sendai. Far beyond lies Morioka with its wonderful mountain. We hope on our return to see that glorious cone towering up into the sky from its plinth of hills, and deserving in grace and majesty its title—the Fuji of Morioka. Around us, the country now is savage and splendid, rolling in wild, bare uplands, jewelled with purple anemones, and crossed by bosky gorges where, amid the tangle, shine like garnets the clustered flowers of *Primula Sieboldi*. But night has descended, and all prepare for sleep. The Japanese, with that enviable disregard for physical discomfort that makes them so blessed by contrast with ourselves, merely curl themselves up and so repose placidly. The wretched Westerner spends the night in thankless discovery of a hitherto unsuspected number of protruding bones, and hails at last with pallid rapture the grey intensity of cold

which announces that we are approaching Sendai. In the icy stillness Sendai lies quiet under the pale darkness of dawn. Its houses are buried in trees and woodland. After a brief pause the train steams on again towards Matsushima and the uttermost north. Colder the air gets and colder, and gradually the passengers, stirring to wakefulness, lift their tousled heads in renewed and frowzy life. An impression of grime prevails, and at last, as day breaks in spiteful tears, the travellers seek to make an unsatisfying toilet. Refreshments too must be taken. In every Japanese railway carriage is always a little samovar offering tea and cups. This is a boon to the weary and thirsty, who rise from it refreshed for the thankless toil of removing at least one of the outer films of filth, with which a Japanese railway so richly veneers its patients. The train hurries on through a country of rugged hills clothed with grass and diversified by trees and forests. The green here has a deep wealth of colour which warns us that we are now among the cooler breezes of the north. Across the broad landscape with its plains and pinnacles the dawn-mist lies in heavy, floating wreaths, and over the whole beats down the merciless rain, whose stern and passionless persistence sheds a deeper note of grey over all the country. Its steady lances slope across the fields in serried ranks ; the prospect has a sombre hopelessness. Mountains and valleys sweep past, and fields, rich with long lush grass. Here and there

the eye meets even the unprecedented spectacle of a cow. Nowhere else in Japan can these useful animals be seen, and after such long disuse our sight embraces them as portentous monsters from another sphere. They seem to be strange geologic fantasies, roaming unharvested pastures, and perplexing the unaccustomed eyes of man with their uncouth serenity of bulk.

Meanwhile the bishop has been aroused by the gathering light, and his toilet is reverently accomplished by the minor ecclesiastics, who tend, wash and wipe their lord with bowings and ceremonies of ritual observance. Finally, when the prelate is robed and ready, an archdeacon piously uncoils the episcopal topknot. The guard of the train, entering on the instant, is pressed into the holy service. Close by stand the chaplains. Then the archdeacon passes a comb gently through the glossy curls, after which the bishop inclines his head, and, while the archdeacon holds the lock extended, the guard pours forth upon it some sluggish unguent from a bottle. Then he continues on his way to his more official duties, and the bishop, his topknot oiled, curled, and once more rolled up, takes his place upon the seat, complete again in the purity of his holiness.

By degrees we come on to a great tableland, ringed in by high mountains; and thus, after crossing broad meadow after meadow, whose boundaries are wide ditches full of water, where the bog-bean

grows gigantic, we sweep round and into Aomori. Aomori stands as it were upon the inner rim of a crescent moon, whose horns, enormously extended, embrace the huge semicircle of the bay. On either arm of the land rise towering mountains, whose flowing curves and bleak expanses are channelled with snow-drifts. Hill and plain have exchanged the oppressive fertility of Japan for the breezy barrenness of our own northern uplands. Here the air is wide and free, the mountains stern and splendid, no longer fluffy with incessant vegetation, but nude, imperious, martial in their Spartan simplicity, as all true mountains should be. The atmosphere has the racy tang of a Yorkshire moor, and the distances wear rich tones of sombre green and purple and azure, such as one gets only in the cool damp air of the North. The view is tremendous and untrammelled—full of spaciousness and a large impression of size and strength. It is altogether different from Japan.

Meanwhile we roam the muddy streets of Aomori, waiting for the hour of our boat that is to take us out of the vast sphere of the bay over the roaring straits to Hakodate of the Hokkaido. The bishop has gone his way, and all our other companions are scattered. Even in the Ultima Thule of Aomori the tide of Japanese life flows fast. The streets are built out with a curious range of wooden arcades, beneath which runs the footway, past the shop windows,

where beautiful baskets are sold, and, for the rest, all the other merchandise of Japan. Forth and back the people bustle in every grade; from time to time one sees a convict clad in crushed strawberry cloth, marching between his warders. But at last it is time to approach the wharf. With no intellectual reluctance does one prepare to leave Aomori. The place offers little mental stimulant.

## XVII

### THE HOKKAIDO

GREY and furious is the sea under a grey sky, and iron-coloured the mountains, as our vessel tosses out toward the uttermost promontories of the bay and the roving ocean beyond. The enormity of Aomori Bay is daunting and overwhelming. Long and long after Aomori itself has faded from sight into the spume of the distance, the huge mountains of the mainland stretch forward to enclose the sea. Far out, a widening belt of vicious green marks the angry surf where the wild rage of the Pacific rolls in to wrestle with the surges from the inter-Asiatic waters in the Straits of Hakodate. The vessel plunges into the chaos of waves and becomes one with the drift of the sea. Left behind now is the upjet of Japan, and we are wending over doomsday to the mainland of Asia. Deep, deep under our keel lie the abysmal blacknesses of that very quiet ocean where no life stirs for ever in the imperturbable darkness that holds the floor of the world. Some four miles beneath us is the infinite night of that abyss where stirs no living thing in the

everlasting immovable silence. For between Japan and the Hokkaido is this great gulf fixed. Japan is a land of itself, the vomit of some volcanic cataclysm while the pulses of earth still beat with crimson rage. But the Hokkaido is part and limb of the cool and immemorial Asia.

At last, through the dancing spume of rain and the livid darknesses of moving storms, appears a headland dimly. In the furious gloom it waxes, hardens, becomes definite, reveals itself as the mainland of the Hokkaido. Soon the Cape of Hakodate forms into sight, and after a driven bitterness of rain, we creep under the headland and into the harbour.

Beneath the bluff and fortified promontory crouches on its twin seas the desultory town of Hakodate. This is a place designed solely for commercial purposes, and devoid of even the faintest attraction in itself. It lies in the midst of lovely country, and yet is not beautiful: it is a crowded city of some importance, yet is not urbane. To tell the truth, it is somewhat squalid, more than a trifle provincial, and entirely unattractive. European sailors come here, therefore the low quarters have their brothels; but otherwise they lack even attractions to please a Westerner. The principal Japanese inn is a vast and rambling construction, within whose labyrinthine warrens a guest is so soon and so hopelessly engulfed that in the event of fire his only prospect is a fatalistic trust. For such a place would burn like

tinder within a quarter of an hour, and seeing that it abuts only on another similar wilderness of wooden hutches, the destiny of any wanderer caught in the meshes of its corridors at the critical moment would indeed be matter for prayer and miracle. The streets of Hakodate offer shops filled with tinned meats and hygienic boots ; its roadways are sloughs of mud. But to atone for the crimes of man, nature has given one of the fairest views on earth. Across a bay of flickering blue waters, starred with shipping, lies a range of rough hills, near enough to have the utmost beauty of line and detail, yet far enough to have all the loveliness of distance and colour. Their shapes are stiff and rugged, their atmosphere soft and radiant. They are glorified visions from the Craven Highlands, seen across the undulating sapphires in the Bay of Naples, through the transfiguring atmosphere of dreamland. Their slopes are patched with meadow and fell, fading from shade to shade of blue, amethyst, and green. They are clear without being plain, distinct without being blatant. They have a splendid subtlety of colouring under all the shifting lights of day. There is something solemn and virginal about the strenuous beauty of their aspect far across the waste of waters. Overhead the sky is of a wild wet blue, with racing clouds. In the moist air the glories of the remote mountains are intensified and made divine. The bay and its view are the salvation of Hakodate.

A steamer carries us away from Hakodate by night, and out thus, round the coast, to Muroran. Of Muroran there is wonderfully little, save a few Japanese houses, and Douanes for nothing in particular. But Muroran has the majesty of nature. Its country is sweeping moorland, diversified with reedy jungle. Above its expanses rise sombre mountains, culminating in some terrific sidelong crag of nude rock — last remaining peak of an ancient volcanic crater, whose circuit, like that of a decaying tooth, has rotted slowly away till only is left this one dizzy jag of bone. The landscape rolls in great open curves of emerald and violet, strangely reminiscent, in the august openness of its majesty and its commanding dignity, of our own north-country stretches of moss and moor. The atmosphere has something of the same primitive clarity, the same stern richness of pure colour.

From Muroran we may take the train for Sapporo, the State-established capital in the centre of the desolate island, on whose future the Japanese once founded such radiant hopes. The railway passes on and on and on, through desolation after desolation of the most crushing description. There are volcanoes, stern and grey, vomiting smoke into a sky only less spitefully grey than themselves; there are almost infinite tracts of desert, hairy with valueless copse-wood, and green with acres upon acres of lily of the valley; there are endless tracts of impassable

and uninteresting jungle, in whose heart, from time to time, despairing civilisation has made some attempt at a clearing. In these clearings are tree-stumps of the destroyed forests, and a wilderness of weeds. Some clearings reach the extent of deserts, and the eye roams disconsolately across their tangled barrenness to the sunset far away. Where the woodland has been left in its wild luxuriance are labyrinths of trees, creepers, shrubs, involved in a hopeless maze. Great magnolias shine, cornels, honeysuckles, azaleas. But the entire effect is sad and hopeless. However, the untouched jungle is less dreary than the spasmodic clearings. Over an unmeasured tract of weeds, coppice, and bamboo, the prospect drifts further away and further to the snowy peaks that mark the central mountain chain of this God-forgotten island. Once the Japanese had the insanity to think of establishing horse-farms and orchards. Needless to say, they incurred a vast and futile expense. No doubt the horses died of melancholia, and the apples swiftly degenerated into crabs. The Hokkaido is a vain land and profitless. After hours of these pathless jungles, and their hardly less enlivening clearings, the train sweeps down into Sapporo.

Sapporo was one of those unfortunate towns founded by an edict. The Emperor of Japan was made by his governors to say, "Let there be a town established in the Hokkaido; precisely where least convenient: and let that town be called Sapporo,

and be the capital." Then descended Americans, prepared to mark out a new city of Eden. This they did, and Sapporo remains the model of their genius. It is planted in the middle of nowhere. All round it lie trackless deserts. But here is a city most pompously laid out, in rectangles; and neatly intersecting streets on the most rigidly mathematical plan. Broad and splendid boulevards cut each other at right angles, and over the splendours of their spacious scheme meander shepherd's purse and dandelion, interspersed with a few desultory human beings. The whole town has the air of a *machine à monter sur place*—a thing ordered ready-made, and set up on the spot. But no powers have ever been able to people this inhospitable city of parade. The shops have a drowsy appearance, the whole place is virtually dead. Its inhabitants have an empty air of expatriation: they seem as listless and lifeless as they are sparse and otiose. But the place has been constructed regardless of expense—a useless mushroom arising obedient to an imperial edict. There is even an Imperial Palace, built in the hope of divine visitations. But the imperial family having shown far too great sense ever to be lured into this prodigious desert, the palace has been turned into an hotel, and the wanderer sleeps upon a bed designed for imperial limbs, receives the moth-eaten porters of the palace in the throne-room, and passes through august folding-doors to take his fried salmon in a

high banqueting-hall, the destined Olympus of gods incarnate. The architectural scheme of the palace is that of a banker's pleasure villa at Surbiton, and its stucco walls are railed in by palisades of convoluted iron, after the taste of Brighton Esplanade. But all this marks the course of progress: and this is how the ardent Japanese have bettered the temples of Shiba and the Kin-ka-ku-ji at Kioto. However, even this effort has not exhausted their ambitions for Sapporo. There is also a museum, where no one goes but dogs, in search of mates. It lies in a lovely park of trees and grass, luscious and vivid as those of Surrey, with a cool, sweet pool in the shadow of the elms. The museum is almost invariably shut, and its exterior blends the appearance of a mission-school with that of a Wesleyan meeting-house. What it contains, no one definitely or with authority imagines. Hard by, across an enormous river of an empty street, whose vast bed glows golden-with dandelion between either deserted pavement, lies a botanic garden. This is the crowning touch of civilisation in Sapporo. In its broad beds of prepared soil the enthusiast notes a clump of forget-me-nots, one debilitated peony, and two pink tulips, who cling to one another desolately, as if conscious of their inability to stand alone. There may also be an obese polyanthus of a common kind, robust in its indestructible health. The other beds lie rich and brown and void, without the faintest promise of life.

They are prolific in labels, but nothing else has any hope of ever becoming visible. So, at last, the disheartened wanderer returns over the huge tracts of pavement through the interlacing parallelograms of the yawning streets to the imperial palace; and there solaces his soul with two odd copies of Sir Walter Scott's *Demonology*, which prizes he has disembowelled from the obscure interior of a frowsy little shop. In Sapporo there is no more to do. Advancing a mile beyond the city, the adventurous is stranded in an inextricable jungle of bamboo, from which it takes several peasants with billhooks to reassure his way back to civilisation. Accordingly the wanderer soon returns to Muroran.

From Muroran a brief journey takes us to Noboribets'. From the station a dubious chariot conveys the curious up into the hills towards the famous crater. Alighting, one walks through tangles of bamboo, illuminated by the snowy stars of trillium. Suddenly, at some bend in the road, a heavily pungent scent of sulphur strikes one's nostrils. We are within range of the springs. Soon the track winds into a forest of oak, and thence into a deep gorge, whose sides are tangled richly with great white masses of dogwood and azalea in the dense undergrowth beneath the trees, nude as yet to the winds of spring. Their high boughs wear a rich and velvety brown, however, that tells of the bounding sap within. The gorge deepens amid sombre greens. Then the road

mounts to the hotel, which is large and spacious, occupied by courteous handmaids from Japan. Having dined off tinned foods, the wanderer mounts the track behind that leads to the solfatara. All round lies a high ring of hills dimly showing to be within the circuit of a gigantic crater, whose sides at places have collapsed, whose energies have weakened, till the fury of the united precinct has dwindled to the explosions of several cones within the band of hills. Suddenly the wanderer comes upon the arid places of death. The crust is bare, flaky, of an unnatural whiteness. The earth is a mere scab, on whose fringe the path wanders warily. The air is full of ebullient subterranean thunders. The solid soil is covered with the blossoms of Labrador Tea. But continually through the film of sulphur irrupt into the upper world horrible plumes of sulphurous smoke, whose dense fumes obscure the high red bluff beyond. Their territory is a ghastly Golgotha of death, forbidding all approach. Ah, those stretches of ashes and white dust in the winding craters of Noboribets'! Crashing clouds of smoke tower forth into the pure air, rising in fantastic volutions towards the zenith, and then, again, subsiding, only to burst forth later with renewed impurity of volume. One feels one's life at the mercy of malignant omnipotencies, so howl and fume the bubbling craters. From hollow valley to hollow valley of cones one wanders over crags and steep places upon others and

yet upon others. Ascending one steep brow under the blaring sunlight, the wanderer passes from a line of vomiting craters down upon a placid territory of coppice. But below that again is a little pool (ringed in by a white rock like live marble) whose ardours flame up to heaven in wreaths of angry steam. All round the hillsides are cool and green and innoxious. No one would have suspected the sudden horror. Then, descending upon a peaceful lake, its whole blue surface is seen blinded by blue vapours under the fantastic peaks. It is an Avernus of boiling sulphur, so harmless-seeming among the gentle forests of bamboo. Yet the nearer rocks are seared and scalded; its breath carries destruction. Above it on the one side is a small bay in the rock. There is a quiet little pond, over whose surface hangs a tender spume. Suddenly on its flat surface rise oleaginous bubbles and slow-breaking ulcers of greasy corruption, whose dissolution taints the air with a hot disgust. These rolling, swelling boils that break so oilily upon the unctuous face of the pool are springs of some horrible frenzy of the rock, whose sweat comes hideously up in rings of sluggish heat for the destruction of all unwary. And still the light blue steam hovers ingratiatingly over the lake below. The whole place is surreptitious in its deadliness, and horrible. From a height one can see the circuit of the old true crater, and realise that all these fuming death-traps are but so many vents of one great rage

that, in the intact days of the crater, knew neither pity nor restraint. Now in a thousand directions the fury of the volcano is checked, but, though distracted, it is no less passionate than heretofore. So we wander through forests of bamboo and lily of the valley to the hotel. Thence, in thankfulness for restored life, we travel back to the railway, leaving behind us the insidious terrors of those tremulous sulphur-crests—those roaring vomitories of the underworld, and those fantastic vapours, haunting crystal lakes with the ghosts of hellish heats and agony. Gladly one gets away from Noboribets', than which few places in the world can be more wonderful or terrible.

So we return to Hakodate. From Hakodate one expedition—fateful word—remains to be taken by the explorers. It is that to the lakes. This is banal and obvious. A train carries the traveller out of Hakodate to the appointed station. Thence he wends in search of a conveyance, through a jungle of fritillaria and Solomon's seal. No carriage is obtainable: till suddenly an impulse of charity prompts a peasant to convey the wanderer in a springless cart. This weapon, if then discovered, might have been recommended to the Holy Office. Without doubt it would have secured a patent from that Society, whose bitterest test was for the utmost powers of human endurance. The springless cart of the Hokkaido, which is a wooden box borne on what appear to be octagonal wheels, over a road

composed mainly of fissures and embryonic earthquakes, would have been found an admirable adjunct to the other touchstones of sincerity adduced by the Holy Inquisition. The victim would have either died or confessed. And each result came, historically, to much the same thing. Arriving, finally, at the lakes, after disembowelling agonies of disruption, we come in sight of one tooth of a volcano, whose main mass is hidden ; of several valleys ; and a pair of disconsolate lakes. Without doubt these are beautiful. One imagines that even purgatory is beautiful after hell. The lakes have a mild but not very cogent loveliness. To adore them the inhabitants must clearly make a virtue of necessity. To those having nothing better to adore, eccentricities of devotion may be pardoned. Slightly wearied of volcanic crags, the wanderer retires briskly to Hakodate, and returns thence by the earliest available steamer to Japan, and so to Tokio. One quits without regret the land of abortive experiments for the land of less abortive imitations. At least the imitations will be comfortable. We want once more to be with Wataguchi, enveloped by the culinary subtleties of Yuki-Yuki. So we haste across the straits from Hakodate to Aomori, and thence take with unconcealed delight the tickets that are within twenty-four hours to land us again within reach of all the multifarious joys of Tokio. So hurriedly ends our experience of that disastrous Hokkaido.

## XVIII

### MATSUSHIMA

AS dawn steals with a bitter light across the landscape the crawling train spews forth his captives upon the chill platform of Matsushima. The country is fertile and undulating, with crests and pinnacles of verdure, livid in the blue and unnatural pallor of the second twilight. A little village gropes and grovels round the station, and from the inn of this village rickshaws are made ready to carry the wanderer to the wonderful islands. The road winds away among the fields, whose wealth of virescence glimmers ghostly. The land ripples up into the foaming crests of pine-clad hills, heavy with a tangled growth of trees and creepers. The air has a cold and acid purity, the earth keeps an ascetic silence, and, under the pearly light which comes with the first and coldest hour of the dawn, the world of mortal things gleams with a pallid and unnatural effulgence that transforms fields into shimmering expanses of magic, and high woods into the unfathomable jungles of gods and devils. The air is sleepy, grey, and chill, full of an acrid note that

invests the unreal woodlands and toneless green of the hills with an unearthly and inhuman vitality. The country has a silvery and august vagueness. Colour has not yet been born of the union between earth and life. All things as yet lie in the dim chaos that lurks between the dominions of day and night. Artemis has stripped earth of her robe imperial in sapphire and silver: Apollo has not yet clothed the mortal world in his livery of gold and emerald. It is the dusk of dawn that rules the fields—that glamour of levelling, blanching twilight in which the senses of humans are kindled by the virginal sting of the air, and the toneless menace of the earth, to imagination of gristly phantoms emerging from the womb of the world in the solemn hour which lies on the edge of day and darkness.

As the sky warms and wakens, the rickshaws run from the bluish desolation of the fields and hills into a little village, and thence, forward upon the road that leads to the sea. Meanwhile nature is stirring, and the prospect flushes into existence; hills and valleys take shape; trees are no longer mere phantoms standing dark and flat against a background of grey. Water loses the ghostly silver of its earlier tones and becomes mere water, lying in pools or runnels under a sky whose impartial transfiguring lucidity of calm is giving place momentarily to the more human flushes of saffron and passionate rose that herald the less judicial, but more sympathetic

day. The fields change from their pallid radiance into quivering waves of chrysoprase, and thence again to the full clarity of emerald. The world becomes earthly, matter of fact, human, and fit for human habitation. The doubtful places are made clear and dim corners of dawn shamed into becoming the obvious nooks of life. Just before the magic moment has passed, while things are still palpitating on the brink of either world, and have now the charm of both, the road glides round a placid corner and into sight of the bay. This is the mystic moment when Apollo greets his Sister. The world has lost its flat air of chaotic unreality, nor has it yet attained that plebeian reality which sheds a glare into the divinest shadows, and makes the holiest corners as vulgar as the common, with the emphasising crudity of its light. The air now thrills with a dim glow of colour. Nothing is yet clear or certain ; nothing still ghostly or terrible. A soft and sweet haze envelops and transfigures all the details of life. The road rounds upon a village-row that fronts the sea. The bay is infinitely calm, infinitely tender in the opalescence of the drifting distances. Dark spires of pine tower over the vaporous glamour of the young morning up into the promise of completed day. Landing at the principal inn, one may look from an upper verandah out into the mystery of dawn—the oldest of all myths—the living born from the dead. For out of the cloudy dusk the world wakes palpitating into

outline; and out of nothing comes that which is the everything of men. Gradually the grey, the rosy films melt and merge into the invisibilities of the past; in their stead stretches away into the remoteness of the horizon a very broad and placid sea of pearl and opal, still dozing in the slothful air of daybreak among the floating mists. This sea of dreams is studded and starred with a galaxy of islands—those famous islands which are the adored spectacle of Japan, third among the three unparalleled prospects of the empire. They are everywhere—an archipelago of isles with a flotilla of islets. Their sails glimmer from plane to plane of the distance out towards the holy and famous Kink'azan, whose slopes are so very far away across the sea as not to be visible from the shore across the stretches of drowsy ripples in the iridescence of sunrise. They are of all sizes and all shapes, these islands—some are high and ragged like clots of soap cast out upon the face of the waters, others humped and placid in the confidence of endurance. Some are tortured into wild pinnacles by the violence of times and seasons, others cloaked heavily with the velvet of shrubs; some are nude turrets of crenelated sandstone that glow in the dawn, others are dark with firs whose plumage takes a reticent depth of tone in the wizard light. Many of the islands are the merest islets, the merest red crags and needles of rock—some fretted and fantastic, others hollowed and top-heavy, undermined

by assault of the waves ; in number they are countless, and their range of shape and size and aspect is infinite. They seem to float sleepily over the placid surface of that phantasmal sea, rocking softly upon its opalescent breast. Here is an Armada upon which once Medusa has looked as it cruised dreamily among the Islands of the Blest.

The wanderer breakfasts in the flush of daybreak. The inn regales him upon boiled rice with Worcester sauce and mustard. The inventive mix this into an appetising mess, and then, filled, if not satisfied, sally forth on to the beach.

Thence a boat, carved after forgotten fashions—a beautiful great clumsy boat—slips out with the wanderer across the plains of the immovable sea. Not otherwise, in a boat not more wonderful, across a sea no less mystic and phantasmal, was the great King of Britain borne to the Holy Isle of Avalon. Alas ! the boat of Matsushima is rude and wooden ; the weeping queens are displaced by grinning boatmen of the ugliest Japanese design. Nor is the wanderer, indeed, Arthur the Sanctified. The boat glides forward ; no other word will express the silky softness with which the skiff passes as in a trance over the misty tranquillities of the bay, among the misty tranquillities of the sunrise, and of the islands, whose bulk, in the fresh tenderness of the morning's haze, looms suddenly out of the drowsy vapours, with redoubled phantasy of steep pine-slope, or toppling,

rosy turret. The bay is smooth as glass, filmed with a glow of opal, of pearl, of amethyst, sapphire, emerald, and jacinth. It might be the pavement of a holy place. Every colour melts into the next, with a subtle gradation of beauty. In open places the floor of the sea is pearly pink and iridescent; beneath the overshadowing pines it takes the depth of a tourmaline; in narrow straits between two walls it gleams with the interlaced blue, green, and rose of the opal; and in quiet gulfs of passing islets the clear depths are emerald in the lucid profundity of their unbroken calm. So the boat wanders on the sea of visions. It floats without apparent motion. It is as if immobile, while past it, in the warm dusk, go dreamily moving the fantastic islets with their silvery bays of sand, their crests of fir, their pendent tangles of shrubbery over the precipices. One brow is afire with azalea, whose flames dance up and down in the mirroring emerald of the water, as the boat sends to the shore a placid legacy of ripples. Or, among kerria and the virginal blushes of the cherry, go roaming the ropes of wistaria, throwing wild arms over the cliff's brink, and looping down to the very water's edge the beauty of its violet garlands. The fairy boat roams over a fairy bay in and out among the buoyant islands of fairyland. But one may even touch on fairy ground. Alighting in a close bay of white sand, the wanderer may dream himself master of a wee islet whose little compass spells paradise.

It is thick with pine and wonderful snowy trees of blossom. The undergrowth is of azalea, whose fire wanders far over the steep breasts and dales of the island, with an incendiary suggestion. Here and there the cool purple of the wistaria twists among the flames like water-sprays, and extinguishes their heat. The ground is jewelled with the turquoise of lithospermum, and the topaz of terrestrial orchids, whose sceptres rise among the fern. The island would comfortably hold in a London square, yet it has all the diversity of an empire, coupled with the remote and untroubled charm of paradise. It falls into deep, wonderful dells, and rises into fantastic crests and peaks, whence one may look forth, between the twisted pines, across the misty blues of the sea, to half a hundred other dream-islands, poised dimly upon the drifting vapours and warmed now at last by the invisible sun to a glowing irradiance of colour. Each island is a jewel fallen from paradise, and shines in the daybreak, over the hazy sea, like a pearl whose heart is rich with memories and tender rainbows. The very air is drowsy and sacred, quivering with an unearthly ecstasy, in which all the features of life as we know it are glorified and made one with the life of heaven. Sweet wonderful flowers are queens of the Holy Islands ; each has an islet for her territory. There are great lilies, robed and crowned more splendidly indeed than Solomon in all his borrowed splendours. Unknown *Auratums, virginia*,

or bloodstained, or spotted heavily with crimson and veined with gold, nod solemnly from the copses where they hold their court. Or strange ladies of the Speciosum family, whom no mortal yet has ever deflowered, bend in their candour of loveliness among the ferns, or star the midnight of the boscage with their heavy glow of crimson. In nooks untrodden rules the snowy trumpet lily, and the exquisite grace of her little rosy cousin. Or perhaps, on a western slope, smiles a wee, pale iris, whose delicacy of lilac and orange is yet unknown in the West. Her petals have the airy grace of an orchid, sweet and fragile; her tints are those of a pale pansy, crumpled so that its soft mauve takes half a dozen lights and beauties; and upon the fair fragility of the petals gleams a shaggy beard of pure gold in the sunlight. Her growth is small and gracious, and, on her tiny wiry stalks, gleams a pair or a trefoil of those delicious blossoms whose colour has a certain definite purity of charm rare among discovered flowers. So here, in the world-forgotten hollows of this archipelago of fairylands, holds court and revel the fragrant Princess of the Dainty Feet, dancing so happily over hillside or the rough edge of coppice.

On some of the islands nearer home are shrines and temples and strange sedilia carved in the living rock. Far down, under the eaten cliffs, the wave laps softly in the cavernous hollows, and the attendant priest has a territory of pure peace for his own

among the trees. Some islets are linked to the mainland by a bridge, and others by a strip of maremma, whose insistent presence robs them of their insulated glory. The little village of Matsushima stretches quietly along the water's edge. It has its inn, its hovels, and its shops, where one may buy quaint wonders in shell-work, grim ghosts—the skeletons of mighty crabs, and strings of odd, precious round pebbles from whose heart flashes a beam of light as brilliant but more richly opalescent than that of a cat's eye. At one point a natural span of rock ties to the shore a tiny islet of crag on whose summit perches a house; through the gap the eye wanders over the sea, into the perspective of a thousand dotted islands. The place is altogether beautiful, well deserving the adoration that Japan accords. It is a paradise whose loveliness is so sweet and compelling that not even the glare of day avails completely to dissipate the ethereality of its charm. Matsushima lies near the beaten track of Japan. But it seems a quiet nook of blessedness, remote from the dust and dirt of the harassing world. Here is the beautiful calm of the gods.

## XIX

### YOSHIWARA

THREE hundred years ago the Tokugawa Shoguns, taking order for every detail in the lives of their subject, gathered all the daughters of pleasure into one quarter of the capital. The Yoshiwara lies far away from the heart of the city, out towards the Temple of Asakusa. During the day it sleeps in a desolate silence, but as evening draws on, the place awakes to its sinister brilliancy. High, barrack-like houses form the narrow streets, whose lines intersect at regular intervals and angles. The towering buildings rise far above the grovelling little grey Japanese houses of the surrounding quarter. Approaching by night, the lofty mass of the Yoshiwara, lit dimly by swinging lanterns, seems an impregnable fortress of pleasure, looming immeasurably superior to the waves of life outside that beat in vain against the base of its great blank walls. From within a ghastly radiance glows and illuminates the atmosphere of the precinct—a glare of misty violet from the carbon lights with which the Yoshiwara is fitted. Approach is made difficult.

The place has but one entrance, which is reached after a long circuit of its wall. But at last the earnest pilgrim of vice wins to his end, and enters the high city of delight.

The avenues are brilliantly lit within the pleasure town. Up and down its ways go thronging happinesses and desires. The narrow street lies in a brawling glare of life, and above the converging walls of light the velvety blackness of the contrasting darkness goes arching up into the holy vaults of night. A bustle and clamour of activities fills the air. Hawkers cry their wares—whether of nature or art: the glad heart of wine shouts to his companion in the trodden way: up and down crowd the pleasure dealers discussing and sampling the value of the shop-windows. The frail, sad notes of the samisen float out into the tumult of noises with a factitious and seductive innocence of tone. But, though here the spirit of the Great Goddess walks abroad and unashamed, yet the atmosphere has a candour which deprives it of the haunting horror of our Western nights. Life, here, in all its meanings, is taken very simply and calmly, and the Flesh goes about its business with a simple absence of parade, affectation, or surreptitiousness that robs the scene of ugliness or tragedy. Further, the whole matter seems to be taken so indifferently—to be made such a thing of course, requiring neither excuse nor display, neither blatant secrecy nor accentuation of motive. This

spurious purity of atmosphere is assisted by the entire absence of the innocent element. There is here no contrasting presence of the innocent—that piquant juxtaposition of lilies and roses that puts the fine edge of suggestiveness upon our Piccadilly spectacles. Vice loses half its horror and half its charm when deprived of the flavouring presence of virtue with its virgin whites to set off the scarlets of Babylon. Vice, without the spicing sauce of virtue, becomes a plain dish, stripped of its artificial attractions, and reduced to its primitive condition as the simple fare of all natural mortals.

For to the Yoshiwara only those come whose object is the worship of the Pandemian Aphrodite; also, indeed, those who are bitten with a morbid curiosity of seeing. It is the wanderer who robs himself of all excuse, and goes to watch and countenance sin without even the shady plea of a desirous purpose. But the virtuous never comes here in the way of life. The virtuous may spend his whole existence in Tokio without once coming into sight of vice. The virtuous is not assaulted for ever in every street by the becks and winks of sin. No man can excuse his fall by pleading the intempestive appearance of temptation in a casual moment of relaxed control. In the city there is this one place where the feet of man may tread the beaten way. If a man do not wish, he need never so much as see the entrance to the broad road; if he does so wish, the distance is long and the

direction is devious—only the patience of desire will carry him to his goal. The place is too far for chance visitors ; it is only visited for a deliberate purpose. And, failing that matured purpose, no man need ever, in Tokio, set eyes on things forbidden.

And the shop-windows ? On either side the street is walled by these high barracks. The ground floor is taken up by the shops. Each room is fronted and guarded from rash approach by a close paling of wooden beams. Behind this cage stretches the shop. It is carpeted in European fashion ; its glaring lights are electric ; it has mighty gilded mirrors of Louis Quinze design, and carved chairs with seats of Utrecht velvet ranged along the further wall. And here the wares are displayed. They sit immobile in rows upon their heels ; their cheeks are powdered and painted, their hair is tired and jewelled like Jezebel's ; their faces are white with an immovable and strenuous indifference. They wear the masks that Desire sets always on the faces of his worshippers, lest the signs of his wages should be too clearly evident. Each young face, beneath its powder, looks out across the world with a fixed gaze of hopeless calm, and the splash of scarlet upon each lower lip has the effect of a bloodstain wrung from bitten lips in far-off and forgotten days, when the owners still were living souls and capable of passion. Now they are dead things, gilded and embalmed before the crowd—corpses throned in splendour, like Inez the

Beautiful. They sit without movement, save for some motion of one to another, or occasional lighting of a pipe. Before them passes the throng, its dull face transfigured into a brazen hideousness by the flare of the lamps within, cast upon gleaming eyes and the flash of teeth, against the smoky darkness of the night behind. In a box beside the shop each owner cries his wares and advertises terms and beauties. But the victims may make no sign or solicitation. Each must wait her destiny. Only, seeing a European face, one girl or another may rise and advance to the barriers of the cage with a faint little silvery welcome and delicate invitations of the hand. Here is nothing of ugliness or the glaring and vulgarising nudity of sin ; only a soft charm and a gentle fascination so paradoxical as to resemble that which we of the West attach to childish innocence. Sometimes the girls may be seen to talk among themselves, with smiles and a manner of unregarding gaiety. For though their faces are mask-like under the disguise of powder, their eyes have not the hungry tragedy that seeks its prey in a Western city. Vice here has lost, with all its crudeness, all its horror and half its tragedy, and yet with no concession made to convention or artificial delicacies. Perhaps the very abolition of all such unnatural refinements has done most to purify the aspect of sin and lighten the souls of its devotees. In any case, the Yoshiwara is not dreadful or horrible ; its tragedy is there, indeed, but

does not obtrude itself upon the sight. It is the truest and deepest tragedy that has no outward sign. Its appeal is not obvious, and is the more cogent for being so little obvious.

Meanwhile the streets lie in the glare of light. Rows upon rows of these shops stretch out into a perspective of radiant haze. Of all glories in Japan the richest is that of the Oiran, or established beauty of the Yoshiwara. Her robes are of gold, of silver, of brocade in every colour and in every device of splendour. Each shop has its one uniform. Here is a row of staring dolls in black silk, threaded with silver. Trains and cloaks and stoles are of crusted cloth of gold. Next door the wares are decked in violet and silver, with splashes of emerald. Grey, blue, and rose alternate with crisp folds of gold in another window; or azure relieved with gold and saffron glitters in a fourth. Here are long ranks of scarlet and silver; and here a line of gold, emerald, and amethyst. Everywhere gold and silver are crusted, heaped, and piled upon the vestments of these priestesses who stand before Aphrodite. The effect is of a tropical gorgeousness. Heavy designs in bird and blossom enrich the diversity of their brocades—great peonies or camellias, broad splashes of colour, undulate upon a gown of grey, whose sash is pure gold, as the girl, rising, crosses the floor to light her pipe at the firebox. Waves of the sea in raised silver ripple and foam across another of dim

but transparent violet. And the sash is the centre of splendour. It depends in front, with a deep fall. It is a cataract of gold or silver. The long, pendent sleeves blink and gleam with threads of tissue in the glaring light. Peacocks strut gloriously upon the sweeping robe of one beauty, and another wears the wealth of the ocean. As the evening passes the thinning ranks in the windows show that Destiny has found its prey. Still the others sit waiting in patience for their turn, while the hoarsened voice of the vendor clamours their merits. Soon after ten the splendour of the show is waning, and by long ere twelve the fate of all is sealed, and the Yoshiwara lies very quiet in the unholy night.

The Oiran are toys of heaven. They come here driven by circumstances. Their habit is cold and indifferent, but the finest tales in Japan are those which relate the fire and the tragedy of a harlot's love. In Japan little other love is possible to man or woman than that outside the pale of convention. Hence the heart's tragedies of the Yoshiwara. To this day all Japan worships the memory of Komurasaki. In the day of her wealth she saved the life of a young man by warning him of the landlord's ill intentions in a country inn, where both were staying —she as a captive and he as a guest. When next she met him it was in the Yoshiwara, for her father had descended from great riches into the bitterness of poverty, and she, to serve him, had sold herself

into the unclean bondage. So there, in the Yoshiwara, the two loved with a wild ardour of devotion. But the man was poor, and the price at which her owners valued her company was high. Soon the lover drained his resources. But his love was not to be so baulked of its indulgence. He raised the necessary price in sinister ways. All his noble ambitions went by the wall. He became a ruffler in the lowest places, he who had aimed at the highest. And so, from between the very fingers of Doom, those two lovers tasted the precarious sweetness of their passion. At last he had no help but to steal. He stole, and with dishonest money bought the continuance of his pleasure. And she never knew the shadow of crime that darkened her happiness, but loved him faithfully in perfect trust. In the end he shed blood, and the price of their love was stained with murder. His crimes increased in number and in notoriety, and their perpetrator was diligently sought through the whole empire. And so the inevitable happened. He was captured, tried, and, on the clearest proofs, he was executed. Though a gentleman, for whom no prize in the state would have been too high, the degraded and fallen man suffered the decapitation of a common murderer. So he lay dead. Meanwhile Komurasaki waited for him in vain. At last the brothel was filled with a dim rumour of his end. Hearing, Komurasaki broke all the rules, and slipped quietly

out and away to the place of execution. Going thence to the temple-garden, where the mercy of the priests had buried the murderer, she found his new-made grave. And there the faithful heart, impatient of separation, hurried to overtake her lover on the road that goes down into the unutterable darkness. Drawing her dagger, she killed herself in haste, lest his soul should be already too far away on the path of death. Faith believes that her spirit and his were at last reunited in the eternities of the underworld, as surely as their bodies were on earth. For the kindly old priest, adoring her loyalty, buried the Magdalen in one grave with the murderer. And Japan does immortal homage to the Faithful Heart, and has given to Komurasaki a name which may be rendered "The Phoenix"—the Rare Bird—the Marvel of Fidelity. So ends the story of the Juliet of Japan. And she was a flower of the Yoshiwara.

## XX

### THE SPHINX IN JAPAN

[NOTE.—Much of the matter of this essay appeared in an altered form in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for the month of April. The kind courtesy of Sir James Knowles would have permitted the reproduction of the original article had the proposed time to elapse between its first appearance and its second been of greater length. In the circumstances it has seemed best entirely to recast the article, as also that on Korea, which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1903.]

A CROSS the pages of many books on Japan drift vaguely sundry conventional little figures labelled "Japanese women." These small dolls bear a marked resemblance to one another, as would have been expected from their utter divergence from the truth. They are all "little," "dainty," "winsome," "winning," "wee," and a half a thousand other monotonous adjectives implying toy-shop charm and toy-shop prettiness. Hence any conception that we in Europe may have formed of the women, both honest and otherwise, of Japan, is entirely valueless and false. The Japanese woman is not the fluffy-haired geisha of comic opera, any more than she is the cold and sullen little animal who gives its title to *Madame Chrysanthème*—a book which, thanks to an

astonishing beauty of style, has been successful in giving a more perverted and pernicious conception of Japan than any other work on the country, however crude. Indeed, it is a poor portrait of typical Japanese womanhood that can be drawn from a study of the common women who fill the open ports for the service of European mariners. As well take from the girl of Portsmouth our conception of the British lady. But, of course, Loti's Kiku was never Japanese at all. She was born, bred, and practised in the debased and brutalising life which grows up in any foreign seaport town, whither our sailors from the West carry our enlightenment and our desires. No Japanese geisha of rank however low, would own such a woman for her kin. It is only in the highways and byeways of national Japanese life that a European can at last, after slow and careful study, hope to catch a glimpse of Japanese womanhood.

Never, of course, may the European expect to have so much as a sight of the Japanese lady. Enough of luck if he see her whirled past him in her rickshaw, or at some official banquet exchange a handful of colourless words in German with some reluctant princess of the blood divine, incarnate in a gown of flame-coloured satin many fashions old, and clouded by a lowering frizz of ebony curls. Thus far, indeed, and no further. For the life of all Japanese women of position is one of noble seclusion.

From their earliest days they are prisoners of their father's palace, and then, when ripe for marriage, their parents take the matter in hand. No question exists of anything so plebeian as love. Go-betweens conduct the negotiations, high and disposedly as Queen Elizabeth. Some family of equal standing is found whose heir is of an age to settle. He, poor youth, is as little consulted as his bride-designate. The autocratic parents decide everything. Thus the youthful are spared, with all love's ecstasies, all love's tragedies, all love's blunders, all the dreary disenchantments of a marriage entered into in the precipitance of young desire. The lovers of Japan are saved from the fate of Romeo and Juliet, who, had not daggers and poisons mercifully ended them, would probably have lived bitterly to repent the insane ardours that hurried them blindly into a marriage based on no real knowledge of each other, but on mere attraction and love-hunger. Nothing is less stable, no guide more delusive and treacherous, than that which the young call love, and the old, more wisely, instinct. The love of the young sacrifices all the years to come for the gratification of the moment. The young man counts the world well lost for love—until that love has been satisfied, and he begins to pay the price. Then, too late, he bitterly regrets the heartless elders who tried to save him from selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, and took such stern steps to marry him to some

nice, respectable young woman, who seemed so uninteresting once, but now, by comparison with his Juliet, grown blowzy and intemperate, such an angel of peace and good breeding. More lives have been more hideously ruined by indulgence in their first amorous caprice than ever by cruel—but sensible—parents, with a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart. The young, ardent with impulse, which they mistake for resolve, are not to be trusted in the arrangement of such a matter as life, which requires not brief flames and frenzy, but judgment, for its management. Then, since parents are clearly more safely to be trusted with the conduct of their children's marriage negotiations, let us not be too hasty to deplore the lot of the Japanese girl, preserved inviolate from all the silly and perilous complications of her own undisciplined, ignorant, and inexperienced heart.

The time comes. The negotiations are carried to a favourable end. The day arrives for her first sight of her husband. That day is also, very frequently, the day of her marriage. She is wedded, bedded, a mother. And—here let upholders of the love-at-first sight theory mark and take heed—she lives happily ever afterwards, adoring her husband. True, her position is that of an unpaid housekeeper—to European minds a slavery intolerable. But in this world all truth is relative, and things *are* only as they are to *us*. As the Japanese woman does not feel her-

self a slave, we should be rash to pronounce her one and bewail her doom. She is happy, doing her duty. This baleful piece of originality, which at once impels us to pronounce her a spiritless thing, is the crown of excellence to a Japanese wife. She is to be always meek, lowly, quiet, acquiescent. She must not chatter, remonstrate, be in any way a nuisance. In such a case her husband frankly and simply declares her divorced, and home she goes to her father's house, bowed beneath a load of shame. For she has been reared in the most iron principles of subjection to man, in the sternest and most chastening conviction of the valueless futility inherent in all women born, and in herself especially as the most worthless of the lot. So all her life is spent in the worship of her master, whoever he may be: her father first, her husband after that, and, last of all, her little toddling son, to whom she must no more ever fail in duty and respect than to her bygone overlords. Then at last she has her reward. For, as she grows old and is made a dowager, the sanctity of her dead husband descends on her, and she becomes a personage, Queen-Regent in her son's house, with authority to make her daughter-in-law's life a burden to her. Fresh to the sweets of power, it need not be added that she uses it abundantly. Cruel mothers-in-law abound in Japanese story, and young wives hounded to suicide. (Who, if they had lived, would doubtless have driven others in the same path, for nothing produces an efficient persecutor so

well as a previous training in martyrdom.) Thus is shown the respect accorded in Japan to age. And therefore it is the aim of every reputable woman to look as elderly as possible as soon as may be. For this reason it is that young married women adopt the coiffure, the dull garments of the aged. Their aim is to be speedily taken for their own grandmothers.

Within doors the married woman spends her days, usefully employed in serving her husband. She kneels before him at his going out and at his coming in, she shows herself sweet and patient, under drunken caresses as under drunken blows. When visitors appear she receives them, if commanded, on her knees, then retires to solitude in her own room. She is at once too honourable and too contemptible for her husband to introduce at his dinner-parties. If he ever did so, his guests would be bored and disgusted. For all Japanese men have the same sincere disdain for womankind. They honestly look upon the female as a creature of inferior clay, and would conceive themselves insulted by the presence, in their midst, of a reputable woman. Respect of course comes in also; yet not respect for the lady of the house herself, but as the property of the master of the house. Her husband ensures her the most absolute deference and protection—not for her own sake, but because she belongs to him. To expose her before the gaze of his men-friends would be a dishonour to himself and his noble family. Accordingly my lady the gracious

princess, on festal nights, sits alone in her room, or in another chamber entertains the other gracious princesses, wives to her husband's friends. Of course, in the case of such very few Japanese—all attached to the Government, as have adopted any sort of European ideas, the matter is entirely altered. The men, so long as they are in office, take their wives out to official dinners at the Legations, and even grant them European precedence over themselves. Meekly the wives accompany them to these banquets, cramped into stiff foreign gowns of a fashion four seasons old. Then, poor little ladies, they go home, and resume at once their national garments and their national manner of genuflection before their omnipotent lords. And even such jaunts into polite European society are matters merely official. No sooner has the husband abandoned office than his wife retires again into impenetrable Japanese seclusion, and may no longer be seen even by such European women as she may have made her friends during this whirl of gaiety.

Yet the life of my lady the marchioness or duchess is neither sad, on the whole, nor idle. She superintends the household. She is for ever honestly busy. Her duties content her to a degree unintelligible to us Westerners, to whom duty presents itself merely as a thing sedulously to be avoided whenever possible. Having no conception that life's greatest joys lie in anarchy, the Japanese lady submits herself with

contentment to the ordered procession of her days and duties ; and in obedience to the laws of her life she finds the satisfaction that we only expect from their abrogation. This is a difficult point of view to understand, yet not, for all its audacity, illaudable. More positive pleasures she has too, in abundance. They are not delirious and keen as our joys, but none the less genuine and delightful. For the Japanese woman asks so little of life that she gets far more than we, who ask so much that we can never be satisfied. It is all a matter of scale and perspective. A cathedral looks large until you put the Matterhorn at its side. Even so, the pleasure of the cherry-blossom at Mukojima is dwarfed to nothing by that of Ascot or a bridge-party : but the Japanese lady lacks the material for comparison, and remains enraptured by her little simple enjoyment, which, to our more enlightened minds, is seen to be so dull, so provincial, so boring. But this need not make us pity her for finding in it her pleasure ; for pleasure is always the same and invariable, whatever be its cause. The individual soul is the only possible test of enjoyment, and joy differs only, not in its own nature, but in that of the minds that conceive it. Some people require to be cheered with champagne ; others can be cheerful upon milk alone. But the quality of the cheerfulness—unless the champagne exceed in measure—is identically the same in either case. In souls and temperaments is the only differ-

ence. So, without commiseration, let the Japanese lady enjoy her simple pleasures, and be cheerful and happy in them, even as Ninon de L'Enclos could be drunk upon a bowl of soup, while other people, less blessed, only achieved the same result through wine.

In gentle duties at home, and pleasure parties abroad, passes the life of the Japanese princess. Her husband carries her to see the Murasaki in Yeddo Plain, the Islands of Matsushima, the Temple of Miyajima, the shore of Ama-hashi-no-date. She watches the moon on Biwa and the early snows of Fuji. Overhead she hears the winter geese, and around her float the lapsing leaves of October's maples. Every season brings her its pleasure—cherry, wistaria, iris, peony, morning glory, lotus, maple, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom complete her year. Her soul is filled with the poetry of life, even as the great Japanese ladies of long ago were filled with it to overflowing. No more, perhaps, does she pour forth poetry like those high princesses of bygone courts; but she feels still the acuteness of delight that inspired Shonagon while the women of the palace arranged upon the sunny terrace great boughs of blossoming cherry in green jars of old-world faience beneath the eyes of an emperor dead and dust before the birth of our first King Edward. Here are the keen joys of the Japanese lady since the days when the bucket of Chiyo was stolen from her by the frail tendrils of the Morning glory, and she,

not having the heart to dislodge the glowing blooms, craved water of her neighbours in a three-line poem immortal now these many centuries. This, then, is the life of Madame Japonaise—a quiet life of duty and pleasure, without stress or storms. Trials may come upon her, indeed, but it is the first law of her breeding that she should bear them sweetly, making no sign. Her sons are taken from her early to be made into men. Her husband may tire of her, may divorce her, make her suffer bitterly; worst of all, he may bring into his house some arrogant, rapacious geisha, who has refused all terms but those of honourable marriage. The first wife, high-born and delicate, has to share her infatuated lord with a new wife, vulgar, fierce, and terrible, the bitter enemy of her predecessor and her predecessor's children. To save these is now the lady's task. All her tact is called into force, if she would save them and have herself the profit of their salvation. For if zeal outrun discretion, if she weep, make scenes, bore or exasperate her husband, he sends her promptly away, and she never sees her children again, unless it be by a momentary touch of kindness on the part of her relentless successor. But this is no very common doom. On the whole the daughter of a Japanese palace is delicately reared, and kept from her cradle to her grave in a life of placid and elegant happiness.

Different indeed from this is the life of her natural enemy, the geisha. To the system of marriage the

geisha owes her existence, even as, at Athens, her exact counterpart, the hetaira, owed hers. For the Japanese girl of birth, like the Athenian, is sure of her own marriage without taking any steps on her own part. She has not, like Western maidens, to surpass other women in charms in order to attain marriage. Her parents are to manage all that. She herself has nothing to do in the matter. Consequently she takes no pains to polish her wits, nor to develop her powers of conversation. She knows that she may read poetry till she ruins her eyes, without, for that, marrying a day sooner or a day later. Consequently she learns as little as possible, and goes to her husband's house, apt in all the details of submission and good temper, but more or less innocent of any intellectual attainments whatever. And he, he takes her sweetness for granted, and very soon comes to find her conversation terribly insipid. Probably he is all the sooner bored by her imperturbable amiability, for there is nothing more provocative of anger than the soft answer (which is, indeed, one of the most powerful engines of irritation in the world). Anyhow, he soon tires of his soft, sweet wife. The Japanese man is not by any means stupid. He is alert-minded, imaginative, receptive, ardent, and brilliant. Accordingly, after some experience of his wife's blameless banalities, he begins to pine for a little lively talk. Nor are mere men any longer sufficient. He must now find something with the

charms of either sex, and the restrictions of neither. And at this point arises the geisha to supply his demand, even as the hetaira of Athens supplied the demand of the Athenians for keener, brighter society than that afforded by their innocuous but unstimulating wives.

The little girl is sold in her tender years into the apprenticeship of some geisha house. Her education is long and very stringent, all the more arduous that she is generally a child of the lower classes; for, in the nature of things, no parents of any birth or means would sell their child into such a bondage. She is most elaborately taught deportment; she is trained, under all circumstances imaginable, to keep her temper, to preserve a smiling demeanour perfectly unruffled. She is made mistress of the full language of courtesy, and brought up in practice of the whole inviolable Japanese code of politeness. Being fixed firmly now in an impeccable charm of manner, the girl passes to her literary curriculum. This embraces the entire mass of Japanese literature, enormous in its range, and much of it so old as to be heartbreakingly impossible of comprehension. No matter. The ambitious geisha must have every classic at her tongue's end if she has any desire for success. She must be able to cap quotations without a pause, to grasp in an instant the most recondite allusions to the mustiest poems, to manufacture at lightning speed the elaborate and tortuous puns in

which Japanese wits take such delight, necessitating, as they do, a familiar acquaintance with all the old tangled literary dialects of long-forgotten courts and capitals. No wonder that few are the children who survive this stage of their training. Many collapse here, and are relegated to inferior hopes. Further, it is of no use to a geisha that she should know by heart all existing classics, if at the same time her tongue be slow and her intellect heavy. She must be swift, brilliant, invincible in darting repartee ; she must never be at a disadvantage, never suffer her brain to be dull, her lips to fumble for an epigram, pun, anecdote, quotation, or sarcasm. She has to be capable of keeping in simultaneous play a dozen of the swiftest wits in Japan, without ever allowing one to make a point against her in dialogue, or her own sweet temper to fail her in the heat of the word-play. She must be sharp too, and brazen; prudishness is not tolerated in a tea-house, nor are modesties, indeed, comprehended anywhere in Japan. But the geisha is to be a crowned queen of talk—of man's talk as well as woman's. She is to have all the attractions of her sex with none of its deficiencies. It may be imagined that by the time this step in their development is reached, the geisha of whom their trainers have high hopes have dwindled in number to a mere handful. And meanwhile the girls have also to be perfect in every word and gesture of all the old Japanese dances. These, though slow and stately,

are far more difficult and agonising of performance than the rapid evolutions, kicks, and twirlings of our Western ballerina. Often the same strained attitude must be held immovable for a score of seconds, and the slow, gradual, protracted motions cannot but be indescribably painful. Further, the process of each dance is ordered with a hieratic sanctity descending inviolate through a dozen ages. Not one gesture, one curve, must be altered by so much as a hair's breadth from the degree and manner exactly prescribed by dancers dead some forty or fifty centuries ago. The only good dancer nowadays is one who never swerves to right or left from the rules of her long-forgotten predecessors. And the result is a sumptuous composition of grace and majesty, which fills the beholder with a ripe feeling of satisfaction beyond applause. Once their end and scope is grasped, even the European spectator becomes captive to the magnificent charm of these wonderful, immemorial mimes of Japan. They are accompanied, too, by songs, every one of which has to be known perfectly by the geisha in all its notes, tones, and inflections. As for the words, these chants are of such remote antiquity that most of their meaning has long since faded out of mortal memory. They enshrine strange relics of courtly dialects buried many thousand years since in the ashes of some imperial palace sacked and burned ; they are full of forgotten turns and forms of speech ; to the present day they

are primeval, unintelligible as chaos. But, even so, not a guttural cry, not a low, wailing cadence, not a shrill flutter of phrase, but has to be learnt with absolute fidelity by the student. A syllable forgotten, a clause ill-intoned, and farewell the geisha's hopes of her employer's favour. When all these things are accomplished, there still remains a final trial. The singer's voice is as yet unfinished. Accordingly, it is said, the aspirant is taken, thinly clad, upon a housetop, and forced there to sing through the long and hideous cold of a winter's night. Either death or pneumonia almost invariably supervenes, and the ranks of potential geisha are yet further thinned at this point. But if the girl escape with mere pneumonia, she rises from her illness with a voice broken to the low and husky note that Japanese taste requires in song. And so, at last, her training is complete.

She passes up from rank to rank. At first she merely appears, performs little tricks of conjuring to amuse the guests, or goes abroad in attendance on some famous geisha. But, if she be indeed a genius, her opportunity comes. At one of her banquets she is at last allowed to talk, to dance. A prince or connoisseur is there, and sets upon her the seal of his approval. She becomes the fashion. The gilded youth of Tokio crowds on her track. Her owners smile, and the prices asked for half an hour of her conversation tower suddenly to a ruinous height. Even so, she is engaged twelve deep for months

ahead. She rises in arrogance and ambition as her popularity waxes, as her robes diminish in gaiety to the dull, dark colours of real eminence. Not Sarah Bernhardt herself is more ardently worshipped and adored than a successful geisha, hired for molten pearls and gold to give five minutes of her wit to half a score of the greatest nobles in Japan. She cultivates the caprices, the fantasies of a triumphant actress. She will not talk, nor dance, nor smile, nor appear, unless the company and its adoration please her. It is not the diamonds of a Russian royalty that can buy him a glimpse of a great geisha unwilling. She knows well how to enhance her value. And all the time her thoughts are fixed feverishly on the terror of the end. She knows her doom unless she can seize firmly on her hour and turn it to profit. Her childish days have seen illustrious predecessors wrecked in full glory by some fatal passion indulged. She has seen how the geisha who indulges herself in the luxury of a heart foregoes thereby all the happiness and splendours of her position. The child's whole long training has shown her that she must coldly bring her charms to market and catch the instant to sell them to the highest bidder, if she would avoid the dull and inglorious fate of the ninety-nine. For how many of the famous has she watched miss their moment, and decay away, mere unconsidered hulks, into waiting-maids or mistresses of tea-houses. So the worshipped actress, with her sweet smile and manner,

is coolly conning her chances. Behind the dainty mask lurks a calculating brain. She sees at last her best suitor. Some noble, prince, or holiness is inflamed to madness by her impregnable charm. On him she pounces with the ferocity of ultimate desperation. He is her chance, and once the claws of the Cat are fixed securely, there is no hope for his escape. The ardour of passion drives him into accepting her only terms, and the geisha, married in honour, takes rank as princess or reigning lady. Her life has won to its end, and she finds herself repaid for all the perils and agonies of her youth. She has fought her way upwards to safety, and from her throne of comfort looks down with pitying contempt on her sister geisha, still struggling in the muddy ways of the world.

But let not this history give a false impression of the geisha's life. Her victories are won solely by intellectual charm. Never for an instant does any sexual appeal come officially into her scheme—unless it be at her own peril. The geisha is the property of her trainers, and it does not at all enter into their plans that she should accept any amorous overtures from her audience. Nor does she herself contemplate such a suicidal step. If, in certain cases, a great noble wishes to buy a geisha to be his mistress, the transaction is one for which incredible prices are asked, and the business is only concluded with the most rigid restrictions and formalities. And no one not possessed of vast wealth and influence need hope

for a moment to purchase the love of a geisha. Such an aspiration would be far beyond the dreams of most Japanese, not to say of a European. It is a wild error to suppose that a geisha is by position a courtesan. She is no more necessarily a courtesan than is an actress. She is, in theory, the minister solely of intellectual enjoyments. But though the wise geisha loves only with honour, yet the class has made for itself an evil name, even as actresses have, and hetairai. For there are inferior grades of geisha; there are houses whose ambitions do not soar so high as marriage. But though the geisha has come, generally, to be synonymous with the courtesan, it must never be forgotten that such a reputation forms no part of her real status, but is an accidental accretion, born from the misconduct of individual geisha, and reflecting no discredit on the profession and its better members. Many geisha are immaculate as many actresses or hetairai. It is their trade, their rule, and their interest to be so. It is made very difficult indeed for them to be otherwise. Yet, naturally, as a chain is judged by its weakest link, even so a class is condemned by its worst representatives, and the geisha has a bitter name in Japan. She is the cold and calculating Demon-cat, ever on the prowl for her prey; her sweet smiles, the dainty remoteness of her charm, are but the mask set upon her callous and self-seeking soul. Indeed, she is soulless, rather; a creature of ice and steel, with no

human power of pity and tenderness, for all the winsomeness of her ways. She it is who brings disaster and despair into the lives of young men and young wives. She is Salome, dancing away the heads of youth. She is *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, who leaves men sapped and bloodless from her vampire-dominion. At our side she sits smiling so softly, laughing with such a pretty innocence. Her eyes are gentle and appealing, her manner gracious with an indefinable but conciliating aloofness. And all the time she is calculating, calculating how best and soonest to suck us dry of money and happiness, how most adroitly to wither the husband's love for his wife, the young man's for his mother. Behind that candid gaze lurks a pitiless devil of ambition and greediness. Subtle, surreptitious, indomitable, and relentless, she lays her plans to build the happiness of her life on the ruin of her victim's. And who shall blame her? This has been all her training. Do this she must, or fail, and fall into the final loneliness and squalor of *La Belle Héaulmière*. Her hand is against every man's through stress of life and circumstance.

Yet, on the other hand, she is also Magdalen. For Love the Invincible finds his way even through the bars of the geisha-house. And in Japan love between man and woman can only be lawless. So the geisha has played heroine to many a sad and glorious tragedy of devotion. Literature is full of

legends telling the splendour of a geisha's love and sacrifice and death. For in the inspiration of her frenzy she knows no fear, nor hesitation, nor weakness. She ceases to have thought for herself, but becomes one white and purified flame of passion. Self-interest fails at the last, and many are the geisha who have cast overboard their prosperity and made shipwreck of their worldly ambition for the love's sake of some man who has forced his way into the inmost hold of that impregnable heart. Fitful and fantastic is the dancer's life, all fire or ice. She has the actress nature, incalculable, splendid, terrible. She is of the highest powers and the lowest, either angel or devil, Messalina or Madonna. Her life is always a bitter peril, either to others or to herself. If she does not hasten to ruin her lovers, Love himself will take his vengeance, and bring her own hopes all crashing about her ears with the bolt of his irresistible sway. Either she must buy love, or sell it—either love, or be loved. One course spells ruin to her adorers, the other annihilation of her own ambitions, though possibly the salvation of her soul. It is open to her to pluck out of disaster, purification, or out of shame, might, majesty, and dominion. And the glory of things mortal is great. Small wonder that many geisha prefer outward splendour to inward happiness. Comfort is more than the precarious sweetness of love. So the geisha makes her bargain with life, selling her heart for a crown. Better to her temperament is a stalled

ox in a wide house, than a dinner of herbs dished up by love in a cottage. Not music, but money, is to her the proper food of love. Yet occasionally Aphrodite visits her and sweeps aside all her sensible resolves. And thence results the glorious fall of her gilded palace, in whose shattered wreckage she finds at last the pearl of life. And whatever her fate, the geisha must pass her days perked up in a glistering grief, wearing a crowned sorrow. For however ardently she love, however disastrously, still she must wear for her other admirers the same untroubled smile of gaiety and enjoyment. Her destiny is encompassed by great perils.

Splendid and tragic is this figure, wild and unaccountable, the true Bohemian temper, as opposed to the domestic. And this is the genuine Japanese woman of genuine Japanese pleasure, as necessitated and made perfect by the system of Japanese social life. She is different indeed from the apathetic, unattractive creature whom Loti found brutalised by European lusts, and after a summer's experience, posed and painted exquisitely as a typical woman of Japan. To the foreigner the heart of the geisha is a walled garden, impossible of access. She is always to him a thing dainty, phantasmal, unapproachable—a creature from another and alien existence, a puppet of strings invisible to European eyes. It is hard for the casual Westerner to come into her presence at all. It is impossible for him to join hands with her across

the great fixed gulf of many centuries that lies between the man of the West and the woman of the East. She is to him a mere dainty mask of delight. What thing, beautiful or terrible, may lie behind, it is vain for him to ask. But never, never has her true portrait been yet so much as attempted by a European.

## XXI

### MATSURI

SHOPPING by day in Japan is an occupation for leisurely gods, it is so pleasant; but even those diurnal joys fade before the fascinations of the fairs that are held by night. Of these Wata-guchi gives us notice—generally, it is true, three nights too late, but always we faithfully follow his directions. The kurumaya is summoned from his kennel to gird up his loins and convey us to the street of the fair; we pass out between our gates beneath the frowning eyes of the Honourable Baby, who strongly disapproves of these nocturnal expeditions as disturbing domestic peace. The rickshaw rattles through the dim streets, along the stretching distances of Tokio. At last, out of the darkness approaches a diffused glare. We turn into an alley brilliant with lamps and humming with the vociferous life of crowds. Here is the fair! We alight and mingle with the multitude. The mass is dense, drifting slowly and compactly past each stall, with its flaring lights and its display of wares. Above, the darkness hangs impenetrably black by com-

parison with the solid luminous shaft that is the festive street. Each stall has its lamp, and from the houses swing globular lanterns, white and scarlet, plain or striped, that sparkle like jewels and contribute a lurid splendour to the glow.

Meanwhile the wares claim all our attention, and all the attention of the crowd. Slowly we pass from one to another. Here are for sale purses and waist-bags of decorated leather or brocade. Next door are silks and satins, coloured strings for the sash, combs of gold or tinsel, a thousand forms of hair-pins, and gardens of artificial flowers for the hair of geisha. Mindful that we are entertaining presently to a banquet in our house the sisterhood of Little Willow Tree, we purchase a selection of blossoms for presents. Then the crowd moves us on, past a booth whose burden is of crude and foreign toys, towards a florist's stall. Here are tiny paradeses: little aged trees, plum, cherry, or peach, according to the season, towzled bunches of white or rosy flower; or twisted pines ready for planting, or blooming azaleas of three inches height. Interspersed are globes of glass with gold-fish swimming. In the brilliant light these glister with strange flashes of brilliancy, darting beams of topaz, ruby, or emerald, as their water catches colour from the lamps, the rosy lanterns, or the green of surrounding plants. Above swing balls of fern, sprouting plumes of verdure. Flowers predominate at these fairs; next we come

upon a booth where small blossoming plants are exposed ; this is not ambitious enough to offer us gardens ; in little pans are specimen jewels of colour. Adonis is here with his metallic sheen of gold, or the rich reds of a tiny amaryllis ; bending wreaths of *Rosa bracteata*, starred with her enormous saucers of subtle pink, or bushes of blooming white jasmine ; the gilded amethyst of *Iris gracilipes*, constellations of dianthus, and perhaps amid a tangle of brush-wood shine the lovely little ragged bells of the rosy Mountain-mirror, the exquisite alpine who replaces the soldanella in Japan, and far surpasses her in beauty. Beyond, again, are bedding plants set out in masses of passionate colour. There are crowded pinks, of the most vivid sanguine and scarlet, whose innumerable blossoms forbid all sight of the leaves ; and the waving elegance of irises, crowned by their loose, gigantic flowers, lilac, white, or purple ; huge peonies throw great patens of brilliancy upon their background ; their colours are of soft rose, peach, or blood. Some have the loveliness of snow at sunrise, others the icy chastity of snow in moonlight. Their names are lovely, too. One is Pearl of Dawn, another Drifting Foam ; a third is Holy Beauty, or perhaps Crown of Dusk. One, of violent crimson, is Fire-flash, and his silvery neighbour is Lady of Glittering Light.

Flowers make way for even more ephemeral dainties ; here are stalls for cakes and buns and

all the nastinesses of Japanese confectionery. Bean-paste and bilious-looking coloured elaborations of rice and sugar repel the eye as fully as further acquaintance with them would repel the taste. But even Japanese food has its surprises. There is one bun, of a sober brown, whose appearance is so little revolting that in a moment of audacity we buy one for a farthing. It proves to be delicious ; it is exquisite, delicate, ethereal. From far away across the abysses of time comes back the haunting memory of that brown bun. She is light and misty in composition, and her flavour is of toffee, strangely subtilised. She is a butter-scotch *meringue*. She is, as Webster declares our mortal life to be, "Mere cruddled milk, fantastical puff paste," crumbling and evanescent as the beauties of youth. To eat her is to eat some delicious dream ; she is flaky with the sweet crispness of a clear vision, and, passing, she leaves a tender recollection of a dear treasure loved and lost.

Then there are stalls of multifarious promise. Peacocks' feathers, rich and sweeping, are stacked for sale. Another booth offers quaint conjuring tricks. There are little chips of wood that, on being thrown into water, develop and blossom into lotuses, fishes, boats, and half a hundred other oddities ; there are little sticks which one lights : they then emit small sparks, and make, on the whole, rather less effect than a lucifer match. On one envelope is a fearful picture of children cowering before a horrible ghost : we

promptly purchase it, and find inside a something which, being lit, is to produce this eclectic effect. It is lit; nothing in particular happens. The crowd at our back buzzes with disappointment. We all move on to another stall, where tiny miracles of workmanship are shown. These are wee cages, built in the shape of ships, gondolas, or palaces, and composed of the finest possible matchwood sticks, built into a series of close grilles. These cages are destined for the singing locusts so dearly cherished by the Japanese. A door in the marvellous cage lifts up from the sill, where each spar of woodwork has its separate socket, and the cicada is induced to enter. Then the cage is hung up in the living-room, and its inmate delights the world with song. The melody is not a pleasure to European ears, lacking the sweetness of a slate-pencil on a slate, or of a knife upon a silver plate, with all the monotonous and violent pertinacity of the two noises in question. The locust sings on one high shrill note, his voice has a thin and penetrating ring; it entirely lacks modulations of any kind, and never appears to suffer from fatigue.

Then there is the temple to be visited. These fairs take place invariably near some sacred shrine, and on some sacred occasion. Thus the park of Shiba becomes a glittering Fair in the second week of April, while splendid services are proceeding in the Cathedral, celebrating the glorious twelfth day of the

month in which the Holy One and Very Holy was manifest on earth in the last of His incarnations. Wherever a Matsuri be found, a shrine will always be its centre. Perhaps it is the little temple down by the moat of that mysterious deity, Kompira—a saint of the Buddhist Church, but wrongfully claimed by the followers of Shinto. Stalls and booths occupy even the sacred precinct. The sanctuary is brilliant with lamps and lanterns, and twists of paper and all the other decorative paraphernalia of holiness. Naturally, the temple is small, obscure, and dingy, standing in a series of little flagged courts, through which an avenue of columns (on which climb tortoises, immortalised in iron) leads up to the doors of the chapel ; in the enclosure is a pool, and shops of refreshment, and seats for the weary. At night, however, while a Matsuri rages, the otiose loneliness of the place is transfigured into a gaudy bustle of life. The god receives. In front of his altar stands a large chest, with a grille of bars across it. All round stand the priests, and a blatant din of gongs throbs upon the air, adding its note of completion to the busy chorus of noise. The worshippers approach, with an absolute faithfulness of devotion ; before the holy place they stand bowed and humble. Then into the chest they cast their mite. This done, they ring a sonorous bell to attract the god's attention. So with bent heads they make their petition and depart. The Buddhist saint is not

angry at his degradation into a Shinto deity, and his worshippers have confidence in his benevolence, whatever name he bears.

Leaving the courts of the temple, the glare of lanterns, and the bustling business of devotion, we pass out through the main gate and along the street with the tide once more. Now comes the turn of peep-shows and pantomimes. The roadway is fringed by tents, each one of which contains some thrilling exhibition and a rapturous audience. In one, a hero combats desperately with skeletons and devils, and, finally, with Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat, whose grinning head waxes and wanes maliciously upon the background in a manner most bewildering to behold. Next door a demon-ghoul performs gruesome antics in a bilious twilight, and beyond, clamorous with drums, is a variety theatre, where gorgeous maidens posture, sing, and dance. The next attraction is a waxwork of famous beauties, bedizened in gold and purple, whose pale stiff faces stare out across the humming throng of their admirers with a ghostly rigidity of courtliness. Their smile seems frozen for ever upon the scarlet mouths. In another tent is an exhibition of sword-play; and beyond that again a chorus of musicians, whose tragic cacophony towers far above the other crowded noises of the fair. So at last we come out into the darkness, beyond the uttermost lantern, and find ourselves in the un-ruffled quiet of darkness. We have reached the

term of the Matsuri. Behind us its multitudinous voice hums up to heaven from the confused glare of the lighted streets. It runs its riotous course for another hour or so, till about ten its brilliance fades, and by eleven the lamps and the laughter are dead. Thus encumbered, with arms full of precious purchases, we perch precariously in the rickshaw among pans, kettles, blossoming bushes, and lanterns. In our faces beat our obtrusive flopping irises, as the kurumaya whirls us homeward.

Arrived, what a spectacle greets us! Wataguchi has removed all dividing shutters, and made of drawing-room and dining-room but one vast apartment, long and low, with its clean, soft floor of matting. Gone is every vestige of European habitation, and the room lies pure and vacant. All round the walls are hung our choicest pictures; and the space is illuminated by festoons of rosy lanterns from beam to beam of the roof. In the further part of the room is a table, standing a foot from the ground. It is set with a cloth and adorned with the promise of a feast. Fruits and flowers are heaped up with the glitter of glass under the rosy glare. Round the table cushions are ranged. Wataguchi is resplendent in sapphire silk, creaseless and beautiful. Snow-Lady, his wife, is charming in dove colour, and the Honourable Babies, stunned into silence by the fascinations of the scene, are posies of wonderful colour. And there, in the middle of

the floor, sit huddling together the geisha. They are four little flowers, gathered into a parterre of prettiness. *Mille-Couleurs* is in violet and saffron; *Marvellous Brightness* in pale blues and silver; the Honourable Brilliance has a robe of misty turquoise, with a sash of scarlet and cloth of tissue; the Lady Little Willow Tree is a gracious harmony in grey and gold. Seeing us, they rise with little thrilling cries of pleasure, and, after due compliments paid, we take our places for the banquet.

The wall slides back for the better admission of food, and the kitchen, with the inferior quarters of the house, is revealed full to overflowing with a vast and enthusiastic mob. For all the servants and all the geisha have invited their families and connections, even to the third and fourth generation, to witness and partake of *Dana San's* illustrious entertainment. So enters a procession of domestics, bringing the carefully excogitated dishes, whose intention has been to ensure food eatable and pleasant alike for Japanese and Europeans. Mayonnaise of lobsters is greeted with doubt by the geisha, but eventually, after many little mincing pecks, approved. Soups are brought of beans and quails; also oysters fried by Snow-Lady most crisply. Then the wine creates its stir. The geisha set their lips to the sparkling brims of the champagne glasses, with tiny exclamations of wonder and terror. They sip very daintily at last, but without enthusiasm. Suddenly *Mille-*

Couleurs expresses a fervent desire for more. She will have it in a tumbler, too. We are surprised and flattered at her eagerness; we pour her a bumper. Swiftly she rises, and away from the room; depressed at this unexplained desertion, we watch her course. She threads her way with care among the shifting crowds in the kitchen. . . . The mob divides. There upon the floor reposes a shapeless mountain of venerable obesity. The lady is grandmother to Mille-Couleurs. Into her ancestress's hand the geisha presses the tumbler, and grandmamma, bolder than her descendant, drinks a deep draught of European pleasure. Then Mille-Couleurs returns to our side and her share of the feast. But at last the banquet closes, and the table is bodily removed. Now follows further diversion. The lanterns are extinguished—all those save in the further room; we are looking from darkness into crimson light at the end of the apartment. We take our places in an ordered row. Willow Tree, Honourable Brilliance, and Mille-Couleurs are to dance for us, to the music of Marvellous Brightness. Sweetly they wheel, advance, and pose immobile under the husky glow of red that fills the air like a blood-red mist. Their faces take a strange blush in the crimson twilight, and their movements are transfigured. Their dancing is so perfect, so harmonious, that they are no longer three, but one most exquisite personality of grace, whose unity of proportion is never for a

moment violated. The uncertainty of the pulsating dusk, which obscures the details of the room, serves only to give the grace of the dancers a clear and unalterable loveliness of impression, whose vivid lucidity amid the surrounding shadows fixes itself upon our memory with an absolute fidelity of outline. Each face, dainty and serious in the preoccupation of the dance, etches itself with unforgettable decision upon the background of soft darkness, transfused with a sanguine glow. Suddenly, our rapt attention is distracted from the picture by a stir behind us. Looking round in impatience of the disturbance, we see rank upon rank of figures sitting motionless in the darkness. Foremost among them is The Mountainous Grandmother of Mille-Couleurs; beyond her, but obscured by her bulk, are dimly described others of the elect: Wataguchi, and Snow-Lady, with their aunts, uncles, and grandparents; the kurumaya, Mr. Desire, with his wife and the Honourable Baby; many others indistinguishable in the gloaming. Behind these again stands a crowd of the less worthy, who are not considered fit to invite into the master's immediate presence. All doors have been by now removed, and thickly thronging in kitchen and bedroom, the dense mass of visitors watches the dancing with delight.

Then, when the dance is over, the geisha return to games or pretty talk. The Honourable Baby is presented with an orange, amid much applause.

Gradually the visitors disappear, and once more the masters are alone with the geisha. Conversation proceeds as usual; compliments repaid by laughter, and laughter by compliments. Then we offer the artificial rosebuds that we purchased at the fair. These are received with squeaks of rapturous acclaim. The geisha proceed instantly to insert them into their lustrous coils. From each broad sash comes a little hand mirror, a powder-puff, and a stick of scarlet. Once the flower is fixed to satisfaction, each little lady brightens up her powder and dabs her lip anew with colour. Meanwhile the lanterns burn out with evil smells, and the feast draws to a close. It is a dream of passionate enjoyment, too good to pass away. Mr. Desire enters, and, mounting on a stool, refreshes the dead lanterns. But now it is late and time for the guests' departure. All are brimming with joy. "Auld Lang Syne" is sung to a wild Brocken-swirl of enthusiasm, which leaves each corner of the room occupied by a little tumbled heap of draperies, as one by one the geisha fly off from the circle at a tangent, and collapse in sheer delight. All is pleasure and hilarity. Far off, indeed, the cares of the world! What matter if the lamp has burned a large hole through the roof? Tomorrow is time enough for worry. So the geisha at last depart, two in each rickshaw, and the night of nights sinks into peace.

## XXII

### THE HOLY ONE OF KAMAKURA

THERE is an inevitable pathos about great and brilliant cities dead long ago, and buried deep beneath sand and the complaining boughs of pines. Kamakura once was a high and famous city, the capital of the ruthless, splendid Hojo Regency. But it is now many centuries since Nitta Yoshisada marched his troops in triumph through the streets, and the most gorgeous metropolis of the East passed away for ever in a storm of blood and fire. The vast bay of Maremma has for boundary now the lapping sea, and for cliffs the semicircle of rolling hills that enclose the bay—last trailing skirts of Fujiyama thirty miles inland. In present days the plain lies tenanted only by a collection of raw new streets and houses without importance. All its glory has passed from Kamakura, and across the barren lands the bending phalanx of sand-pines wanders whispering down to the sea of all the glittering ashes upon which their roots have fed these several ages. The wind wails sadly through their branches of the

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rich gardens he ruffled long ago, and, under the unwinking sun, a desert tract of dune and moor grows a hard-won crop of weeds where once the splendours of old Japan went gloriously in their pride. Only in ill-discovered corners lurks some surviving holiness of Kamakura.

Still from her terrace K'annon-Bosatsu "looks out across the sound of prayer." Her shrine is still gilded and frequent, and, within, her colossal image towers up into the holy darkness of the Inmost Place. Her High-priest still collects worshippers, and hangs upon her walls a notice of appeal to foreign strangers that should melt even the heart of the travelling Anglican curate to a sentiment of reverence for that Eastern Madonna who, of her tender pity, preferred to return to earth and watch over the happiness of men rather than pass to her merited place in heaven and assume the perfect glories of Buddhahood. In ravines among the boundary hills other temples lie. Over a brow, in a hollow way, is the temple of Our Lord Emma-O, the King of Hell. As his priests unlock for us, in the gloaming, the doors that hide his image, there springs out upon the dusk an awful face, contorted into a passion of inventive malevolence, whose glow of dim red in the deepening darkness lends new horror to the gleaming, fearful eyes, the sculptor's terror in hell, which he was sent back to render faithfully upon earth. Behind his altar crouches the god, writhing

for ever in the fury of his immortal rage against human sin and weakness. He is terrible as justice, violent as righteous wrath. There are many Christians whose gloomy theology might profitably adopt the image of Emma-O. Beyond his shrine, again, is an ancient temple and garden of Chinese fashion, lying now very quiet and empty in the twilight. The garden is full of pools, with stunted trees and winding ways, while, behind the temple, paths go climbing the many little steep monticules, from the highest pinnacle of which only the glare of sunset prevents the climber from seeing Fuji the Holy. But the most august shrine of Kamakura that now stands is the stately temple of Ojin Tenno, the Lord of War, whom his mother, the Empress Jingo, bore within her during the three years of her Korean expedition, and who, after his long imperial career had closed, became a god, with the name of Hachiman. He was a mighty warrior, and his temple stands very lofty and great, to which an avenue of pines leads up across the desolations of Kamakura. Broad stairways of pomp carry onward to the shrine, from whose terraces the priests look out across the plain that once was a city full of pleasures and passions; from the rolling hills across the desert plain to the shore where the Regent made slay the ambassadors from the Mongol conqueror of China.

But of the many holy things that still keep watch upon Kamakura, the holiest of all is adored in a

temple-precinct near the town. Through a fertile grove, over flagged pavements, leads the way to the feet of the Eternal Buddha. Twice he has seen the glories of his vast temple swept away, and now, the Humble-hearted, having no regard for the world's accidents, sits calm under the sky and dreams for ever of the world's salvation. The sun wears him by day and the dew by night, but he regards only eternity. Empires and principalities have passed from under his gaze, but his thoughts are fixed for ever on the ultimate mysteries of life and time, sorrow and death. Yet he is no human Buddha. He does not represent that glory of Sakya Muni, who lived, renounced, achieved, and passed ; the Daibuts' of Kamakura represents the incarnation of the Buddhahood, who never was and never shall be incarnate—the Buddha-Amida, deathless and eternal, who was from the beginning, and outlasts even the unimaginable end ; whom no thought, mortal or divine, can ever conceive. He has neither body, parts, nor passions ; he is without shape or feature, without wrath or envy ; he is the spirit of wisdom ; of the undying truth ; of supreme revelation and the salvation to which all must attain in the scheme of the Great Laws that framed the world. He is Amida-Buddha, the embodiment of divine reality, the gospel made spirit, the Saviour who was not, is not, and never shall be ; who yet is and was and shall be for ever ; the Spirit of life and truth, to which all the

Holy Ones that ever came and went have turned the hopes of the world. He is the Father and the Holy Ghost, without the cruelty of creation or the weakness of intervention. He is an Essence purely spiritual, a formless King of Happiness to whom the feeble imaginations of men are forced to give a human form and the egoistic worship of human prayer.

Much nonsense is talked officially by the globe-trotter about the Daibuts' of Kamakura—that custom reveals the full beauty of his presence ; that, as a man stands in front of him, the towering Colossus develops an unexpected charm of grace and smile. Let it be freely owned, the full face of the Daibuts' is a disappointment. He leers ; he sneers. The divine calm is apparent, but it is a calm of hostile indifference towards the world and the sorrows that Sakya came to heal. But the true face of the immortals is always hard to find. Along the beaten tracks of life God looks cold and disdainful ; it is only if one pierce hardly through the thorns of the world, and battle a path for oneself among the jungle of troubles, that at last one comes to see the immortal faces as they are, in all their high ultimate compassion. Even so with the Kamakura Daibuts'. Approach him along the appointed easy paths, and you meet him contemptuously smiling at your avoidance of care, and your griefs so little that they require so little effort in attempting their cure. But turn away and wrestle up the steep hillside, through'

a tangle of thorns and great nodding lilies—pass upwards through the arresting boughs and the creepers that spend their strength in retaining you to earth—and then, at last, will you win to a sight of the Eternal and Divine. For that profile above the leaves is the most lovely thing of human invention. There you see God, as man in his truest moments has always figured him—the infinite tenderness that stands above all weakness ; the patient compassion that never condescends to the abrogation of laws ; the just mercy that ordained these laws to the merciful purpose of the Immortals.

The Buddha is a Sakya-Muni in his love, his deep pity, his far sight across the fields of human error, and his unwearying helpfulness that watches and shows the way out of the wilderness. Standing beside the Buddha of Kamakura one sees the Blessed Father keeping silent and faithful ward upon the world he saw created for love and not for damnation —the Master of Time and Things, before whom the years and sorrows cease to exist, who bids man face his life without cowardly appeal to divine responsibility, but with sure trust in the salvation that God has appointed for his achievement. The sweet, calm face speaks of weariness and worries dead ; the delicate mouth smiles for ever with the message, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Here is the true Giver of Rest, the Comforter who teaches bravery and

joy in life, through the knowledge that the root of all grief is disappointment, and the root of all disappointment desire. Here is one who cries for no feeble renunciation, no desperate self-indulgence, but who promises rest from weariness, release from loneliness in pain, through the clear truth that God is just, a man's fate his own work, a man's sufferings the mere punishment of his selfish and inordinate demands. Each life, says the Comforter, is an antechamber to the soul's throne-room. Why, then, waste time in weeping upon the thresholds, and in sighing over matters that we pass on our way to the end? Nothing through life has importance but that we keep our souls clean upon their progress: all else is vanity, if we train ourselves into appreciation of the true perspective in things transitory and eternal. So sorrow dies; doubt and all the despairs that other religions have so vainly tried to kill. Looking upon that gracious Amida of Kamakura, we forget at last that he is the image of an abstraction, and take him for the Living Saviour, for The True Holy and Humble, Shaka-Buddha, The Best Friend Of All The World.

## XXIII

### ENOSHIMA

ENOSHIMA belongs to Our Lady, Benten Sama, the Thalassian Aphrodite. The holy peninsula lies along the barren coast southwards from Kamakura. The road is clogged with sand, wandering on the verge of shifting dunes, where the horned poppy is golden among waving bloom of pinks. Soon the sacred place comes into view. It lies, an apparent island of wooded crag, out into the long clangour of the Pacific surges. It is high and shaped with a beautiful augustness of proportion. Then, approaching, we realise that Enoshima, though by courtesy an island, is in reality separated from the shore only by a tidal bank of sand, which at high water, indeed, isolates the pile of Benten, but at low allows of dry-shod access. To make life easier for the inhabitants of Enoshima a crazy gallery of wood totters out across the whole long sandy neck to bind the island effectually to the coast. Up this we pass from Japan to Enoshima, over the wet unwholesomeness of the sandbank. The village lies huddling on the nearest landward corner of the island. The

remainder ground is holy to Benten, whose mystic caves honeycomb the cliffs. Beneath Tori of the proper religious shape the wanderer sets foot upon Enoshima. Far behind him lies the coast, undulating into the infinities of distance. In the violent haze of heat the mountains are not visible.

Enoshima is a quiet little village, dominated and fostered by the foam-born goddess, and by her temples that cover the hill. Under the palpitating fury of the sun, its main street stretches upwards, breathless and drowsy towards the impending masses of rich green from the great trees at the entrance to the sanctuary, whose heavy boughs shed a relief of green over the glare of sunlit houses. Blinds of a dazzling white brilliancy are drawn out over the shops, and beneath them lies contrasting in the alley-ways the intensity of shadow, black and vivid. The shops are generally for toy-wares and dainties manufactured from shells. The holy Lady of the Sea offers for purchase the wonderful things of her realm. Every size, shape, and colour of shell are there, from huge clamlike things to tiny cowries of pink, lilac or grey, strung upon long chains, with tags of orange and scarlet wool at intervals. Also there are little storks, whose wings are of scallop-shell, and their body a whelk. These birds depend from slender threads of cotton, so cunningly balanced that when they are pulled the pinions of the stork are agitated, and he seems to fly. Then there are globes

and cups of marble—rosy, emerald, or mottled: bones of fishes, the panoplied remains of giant crabs, spiky sea-urchins, huts, platters, bowls made out of incrustations of shells. Then there is the famous wonder of Enoshima, the Glass-rope. This vaunted marvel is fished from the surrounding seas. In appearance it resembles a house-painter's brush, or a living encrinite; its plume is a glistening bunch of threads in a substance like isinglass. Almost every shop of Enoshima offers this treasure of the deep.

At the end of the steep street we come suddenly out of the diffused heat of the sun, through the white awnings, into a sudden blessedness of cool beneath the trees. Here is the gate of the holy territory. Through it we pass, and thence up flight after flight of broad stone stairways in the woodland; ignoring the caves down by the sea, we toil upwards past temples and other temples, towards the main shrine of our Lady on the summit, where is held the cult of Benten Sama, Stella Maris. The ascent is steep and long, and the air breathless with a quivering stress of unvarying heat. Near the summit is a small hostelry, with shaded courts facing out over the sea towards the northern coasts and Kamakura. From its terrace the prospect is wide and peaceful. Sheer beneath lies the pebbly shore of Enoshima, with a small promontory of rock jutting forward into the sea. From our commanding height its cliffs are ridiculously foreshortened. Behind it is

the beach with a few huts crouching near the precipice. The mountain-side is broken by trees protruding their branches out over the sea, whose clear blue glitters up to us between their meshes. The sea itself lies rippling very happily in the light. On its surface drowsily floats a pair of fishing-boats, whose indifferent ease has the aspect of a siesta under the motionless glare of midday. Further and further the sea unrolls its panorama of blue distance after blue distance, into the dancing dimnesses of the uttermost mist, where sky fades into water, and the low-lying coasts by Kamakura emerge only from the indistinguishable boundary of land and sea as a vague wreath of cloud drifting across a horizon which has ceased to be a horizon, so softly blended are sea and sky into one indeterminate atmosphere of mere colour. Away to the left curves the nearer shore, heavy with its heavy greens and dense solidity of verdure beyond the airy delicacy of the sea. Across the inlands, quivering raptures of sun vibrate away in an ecstasy towards the mountains. But in the shafts of heat, all the country stretching towards the holy Fuji is confounded into one golden obscurity of light where nothing is discernible. The air is still and leaden beneath the implacable rays. All the winds have flagged and failed. Perhaps they are resting under the cliffs in the cool caverns of the Lady Benten, where the sea-waves ripple sleepily against the rocks.

It seems hard to believe that sometimes the Pacific comes roaring in upon Enoshima with a passion of tremendous rage. Then the long waves leap up towards the shrine, foaming in their leaping rage like baffled beasts. Then the quiet blue sea changes to baleful greys and greens, and from their slumbers wake the irresistible crests of water. Truly the Lady of the Sea does wisely to have Enoshima in her keeping. Under her dominion the holy island is safe from the rush of her subject seas. But the days of her sovereignty over the island are drawing to an end. For the Government is establishing fortresses and military precautions upon the sacred soil of Aphrodite. And when has Aphrodite been content with a divided sway? Surely the Lady Benten will scorn to share her empire with uniformed officials. Surely she will retire from the holy place where so long she has been Queen—which so long she has held beneath the protection of her divinity. Then when the shrines are desert and cold, the wrath of the sea will fall upon Enoshima, and the goddess will be avenged. No longer will her subjects respect the territory where their Lady is no longer worshipped; from which in sorrow she has turned her feet. So the rocks will be gnawed by storms and the holy caverns broken and devastated by the waves; and Enoshima, once the flawless and incorruptible, will collapse at last, a mere wreck, into the devouring waters. And the armaments of modern

Japan will not prevail so easily against the ravening fury of the ocean, as did that gentle reverence which bowed in worship before the Lady of Life and Death, who is Queen alike by land and sea. Meanwhile the goddess is still enthroned upon her pinnacle, and the evil day is not yet. The hands of this world have not yet entirely soiled Enoshima with the brutalities of possession. The island is still a sacred place, filled with the unworldly peace of sanctity.

Descending from the wooded hill of Enoshima, we come upon the steep village and thence to the crazy arcade of woodwork that is our sole approach across the gulf of water. Arrived upon the mainland, our rickshaw conveys us over sandy tracts through the devious places of the village to a railway. Thence a tram carries us across the dusty fields to the train. The station has an unwonted aspect, when we reach it after our dusty peregrinations over field and copse. The whole wooden fabric is swathed in cloths. Cloths depend from gangway and bridge; cloths wave in close rows between the station and the outer world; cloths everywhere, obtrusive and flapping, part the profane crowd from eyesight into the sacred enclosure of the train. Meanwhile our own ticket has been taken amid the tumultuous interest of crowds, and the destined moment of the express is expected eagerly. For the desolating glare, the paralysing heat of the village offer few recreations during the weary hours of waiting. Even our

inquiries as to whether the swathed station is expecting an annual wash meet but tepid response. So we await the arrival of the train. Suddenly it is signalled, appears, and without the faintest inclination towards its appointed rest, disappears in a whirl of dust; the traveller hops the platform with futile indignation. Then is revealed at once the answer to the enigma of profuse bunting and of the fugitive and defaulting express. For the bunting and all the voluminous decorations had been affixed in honour of certain imperial sacrosanctities who had deigned to avail themselves of that express for their journey back to Tokio, thus cutting into fragments the designs of all their less divine compatriots upon this terrestrial globe. But who could have the effrontery to enter a train hallowed by the presence of imperial immortalities? And, of course, no train conveying divine relatives could stop for mere earthly passengers. So, appreciating Japanese devotion to loyal ideals with some reluctance, the wanderer awaits amid the dust and glare of killing heat the next train at some three hours' distance.

The Court ceremonial of Japan is rich and marvelous. We must hope that at least those evasive princesses enjoyed the breath of life. For it is not etiquette that any prince or princess of the blood imperial and divine should pass from life anywhere but in Tokio. Accordingly, when a very high sanctity, the adopted uncle of the Emperor, died

at Osaka, the thing could not possibly be tolerated. The whole world knew that his August Serenity was dead, but it was merely announced that His Imperial Highness Prince Blue Headland was suffering from an exaggerated cold; then the corpse was transported, coffined, to Tokio. Its approach was heralded by enthusiastic bulletins, reporting the healthful appearance of His Imperial Highness at each station of importance. Finally Prince Blue Headland was declared to have been received at the terminus in the capital by a crowd of officials. The journals even recorded the blooming cheeks and robust health of the divine person. After his adulatory reception, it was declared that the Avuncular Sanctity of the Prince drove away in state to his palace. Now, having landed the corpse in the capital, the dead could be permitted by etiquette to die. Accordingly the sacred uncle who had reached Tokio in such radiant health was allowed on arrival at his yashiki to be suffering from a temporary but regrettable relapse. A day later His Imperial Highness was admitted to be in a critical state; the next morning the world bewailed the sudden and unexpected death of His Imperial Highness Prince Blue Headland. And all this for a man whom everybody had known to be a corpse for at least a fortnight. These are the subtleties of Asiatic ceremonial.

Meanwhile the heat of the day fades while the

wanderer awaits in the dust the next train capable of conveying him to his home in Tokio. At last comes a lethargic lizard of carriages, into which mounting, the traveller is very slowly carried back to the capital, with pauses at every platform. Most leisurely the train meanders across the sunlit tracts of the plain, upon whom sunset throws the glory of his illumination, till at last, in the glamour of a summer twilight, the wanderer is deposited at Shim-bashi in Tokio. Here faithfully waits Mr. Desire, who, taking us up in the kuruma, proceeds to whirl us home to our friends. Suddenly comes a pause, entirely unexpected. The road is hedged with dragoons, and the centre-way is kept void. Then, after a pause, comes the thin cry of trumpets. Something August is on the road. The guards stand firm, repelling the gathered crowd and its enthusiasm. The trumpets draw nearer. European heads are bared. Down the breadth of the enormous street proceeds a slow cortège with flying banners. After four outriders comes a tall landau, enclosed, and drawn by many horses. Within, the wanderer catches sight of a profile, gracious and tender, beneath frizzed curls, and a crowded hat with French forget-me-nots in bunches. The face beneath is very sweet and fresh, full of a pathetic charm of beauty. She passes, alone on her seat, amid modest murmurs. And now the mystery of our delay upon the railway is solved. For that lady, upright among her cushions, is no

less a person than Her Imperial and Divine Eternity, the Lady Springtime, Empress of Japan, returning from the exhibition at Osaka. So proceeds on her way a dainty and splendid lady, whose daintiness of beauty, supreme over even the desecrations of the guise she has chosen to adopt, makes her the marked goddess among the women of Japan. Even in our lumpish gowns she is gracious and beautiful; what then would she be in the ancestral costume of her nation and rank? The lovely Empress is borne down the road, and as the trumpets close upon her, following her way, the crowd irrupts upon her track. She has passed, the sacrosanct and immortal; even the Westerner may keep a vision of her fantastic grace of dignity, rigid among the most uncouth and ominous surroundings of ugliness. The gates of the palace clang behind her divine majesty. But she abides before our memory, a dear and delicate phantasm of loveliness. Nothing can mar the refinement of exquisite beauty possessed by these princesses of the blood imperial and God-descended of Nippon.

## XXIV

### IKAO AND KARUIZAWA

Far up on the mountain-side clings Ikao to the slope. Away, below it, falls steeply shelf upon shelf of the mountain to the broad plain beneath, that rises again beyond in harmonies of sapphire and gold to the piled ranges of the ultimate hills. The journey to Ikao from the railway is beautiful and long. It cannot be less than thirty miles that a rickshaw conveys us; first along a dusty highway, through the level lands, threading little villages and fields of rice, and mulberry-groves for silkworms; then, with a sharp turn, setting to climb the mountain, over whose undulating shoulders we curve laboriously for hours, until the sun goes down, leaving the world in the sombre splendour of twilight. Each bough of pine, each wreath of cornel, takes a metallic majesty of darkness in the gloaming, against the sky, dimly furious in saffron and misty scarlet, as daylight dwindleth into the mystery of darkness. The air is transfigured to a new and immovable solemnity in the silence of dusk, where all creation stands at pause

before the heralding wizards of Our Lady Selene. Earth lies appalled into a transparent calm beneath the greenish and unquivering light which falls from the dying west. And the journey carries us up, and up, and up, through indistinguishable copses of pine and lilies; across heaths, whose detail is melted by the awe of twilight into a uniformity of heavy violet, starred only here and there by the pallid gleam of a dracocephalum, whose blossoms are rich by day with the most dreamy softness of turquoise. Gradually the darkness deepens, and, even as we mount higher and higher into the chills of evening on the mountain, the glow of sunset sinks and passes in the murk of night. At last, after steep labours and inhuman gradients, the road suffers the rickshaws to crawl panting up a final slope and into Ikao. Night is now fallen black across the world, and nothing of Ikao can be seen but the promising illumination of the inn.

The next morning reveals the place. On the sheer incline of the enormous mountain slides precariously the little town, whom one imagines to be desperately clawing the hill for maintenance. Below, the world drops away into the infinitesimal vaguenesses of the valley. This is so far beneath that little of it can be discerned in the haze of blue and gold. All details of life are blotted out by the distance. So the valley curves and rolls towards the opposite range of mountains, whose rough lines stand out against the horizon,

softened now by the tenderness of day, into a grace of gentle blue. The landscape is glowing with ripened corn in May, whose gleaming wealth lends a mellow colour to the prospect. The world, as seen from Ikao, is patterned into tiny squares of gold, intersected and scattered with patches of misty azure for hedge or coppice or forest. The air has that indefinable wealth of pure, moist colour that gives us in England the astonishing tints of a Surrey distance; the atmosphere has that same precise quality of appealing gentleness: through it the mountains opposite, the valley mapped out beneath our feet, take the same dusky tendernesses of clouded sapphire and drowsy gold, that once, on a famous occasion, the distracted eyes of Emma adored perfunctorily from the summit of Box Hill. The Englishman recognises in the air of Ikao a compatriot tone, and the more sympathetically loves those broad expanses of vaporous blue, fading from shade to shade, in the velvety profundity of the distance. From Ikao we seem to have for prospect from our elevated platform in the mountains all the kingdoms of the earth, and among them that island, well known, whose smooth charm we recognise with joy in the wild uplands of Japan.

Ikao is a town of small, precipitous streets. Behind it the mountain rises as round and steep as it falls before. The place has a repute for sulphur springs, which rise boiling from many a vent in the volcanic ranges of the country. Ascending, one proceeds

through densely wooded ghylls, where the air is heavy beneath the riot of vegetation. The lower scrub is matted with bramble, briar, honeysuckle ; above go towering the trunks of great trees, interlacing in the thickness of their growth. Tall and slim, *Magnolia hypoleuca* is a candelabrum for her glistening white flowers. Oaks in sorts, and other trees of the forest, crowd into the mass of verdure, whose weight so burdens the atmosphere with an oppressive sense of close luxury and enervating opulence. Sulphur streams flow bilious over their gleaming stones of saffron and orange. One little glade is overarched entirely by boughs, and, in the green twilight, the rivulet streams placidly on its way, between high banks of rich red earth, feathery with ferns. There, in the dusk, are seats and benches for repose. The whole place has the air of some quiet precinct in the untroubled gloaming of the sea. It is immortally green and peaceful beneath its canopy of reticulated shades. But by degrees the track sweats up through the woodland out on to the open ground of the unsheltered mountain. At last, a steep clamber brings us out of the sheltered dell, upon the wind-swept upland. Thence our way is over a sweeping moor of grass, and ruffling flowers in the wind. The curves of the hill-side are clear and gracious, and above stand the jagged teeth of mountain that once formed part of some volcanic crater. But the kindly years have shrouded these dead things with soft cerements of

green. And each dagger of ominous precipice and pinnacle is now a gentle dome of verdure, standing clean up from the moorland, but with no rude suggestion of crag or roughness. Every peak is warmly clad; some in the velvet of wood and copse, others merely in the shimmering silk of grass. Yet all are mild and beautiful, lofty but not threatening in their looming majesty. So we roam across the waving moor. Here, in the herbage, nod pale columbines, airy upon their stems; purple asters stand erect; and, in little hollows of an occasional slope, the great rosy slipper of *Cypripedium macranthum* crowns most gloriously its mass of foliage. The azure stars of lithospermum occur in galaxies, and the liverish leaves of erythronium, unctuous in the beauty of their mottled marbles. Over a saddle, beneath two toppling pinnacles of rounded vegetation, the track wanders away towards Haruna—the lake, and the wonderful configurations of rock. But, after a siesta spent on a rough little rocky crest, where small but disappointing plants bloom from the crevices, the wanderer roams carelessly back, over the wealth of grass and blossom, to the close glens and the hill-gripping streets of Ikao.

Thence the returning journey trots easily down the white inclines of the road, between the heavy hedges of bud and blossom, towards the distant railway. At one point there is by the wayside a temple, enshrined richly among waving pines. It has a little

rock-garden fronting on the road. This is a territory of eight foot square, composed in a pebbly hollow. The bounding wall is a precipice with a jutting promontory of crag. Ivy drapes the uppermost pinnacles, and down the face of the rocks go drifting wreaths of creepers. From each fissure sprouts a bush of azalea cut into a rounded shape, whose pruning results in a concentrated ball of fiery blossom against the grey of the cliff. As for the floor, it is of white pebble, diversified with mossy stones. There is, about this small compilation, a magnificent delicacy of refined imagination, which has designed the limited space into a perfect proportion of mountain rock and dale. The illusion is pleasant and convincing. The tiny garden has, too, a kindly luxuriance not often permitted to Japanese creations. It riots with blossom and leafage. Yet, for all its masses of bush and flower, the effect of the whole is never injured. The conception remains unmistakable. Here is a tract of precipice, immemorially overgrown with shrubs; a steep place falling through woodland into the embrace of the sea. The garden is some high headland and craggy bay, at whose feet lap the passionate seas of Japan.

From a dusty town in the plain starts the railway that is to climb up to Karuizawa in the mountains. Slowly the engine snorts and pants through interminable tunnels with occasional glimpses of hills fantastically turreted and heavily clothed with forest,

towards the health-resort in the clouds. The air grows gradually keener and purer, after the sweltering warmth of the plain. Then, through a tunnel of unusual length the train debouches upon the plateau of Karuizawa. Succeeding to the unbounded promise of the ascending landscape, with its variety of crag and jungle, the summit is a grievous disappointment. For Karuizawa lies in the fold of a flat desert, where little grows but wind-swept sedge. All around the hills rise fat and lumpish. The air is bleak and spiteful as it drives across the rough tracts of level desolation. The road wanders from the station across the dreary plain to the humped hovels whose squalor marks the lair of Karuizawa. The wind fretfully harasses the bending reed and iris across the quivering surface. Here and there are great fluffy seed-heads of *Anemone cernua*, and occasionally a few bushes of scarlet azalea. But the prospect has a heavy dreariness under the steely sky. Then, with a sharp turn, the road diverges towards the hotel. There, at least, are warmth and peace from the shrilling peevishness of the wind.

A ponderous god rules over the bleaknesses of Karuizawa. Pushing aside the shutters at daybreak, we see the divinity whom clouds had obscured from our sight through the previous afternoon. Obese and sullen, the cone of Asama-yama rises above the lower hills far into the bitter sky. From the crater goes foaming the god's dense plume of smoke, swelling in

volume and shifting heavily with the movements of the shrewish winds. He is very large, very terrific, very imposing in the brutally ungraceful massiveness of his bulk. His lines are clownish and heavy, but cogent in their Britannic bluffness of force. He is a squatting giant of cinder and ash, in whose heart flames an immortal rage, which his gaping mouth vomits ceaselessly upon the pure air in filthy smoke and expectorations of fiery stones. He is a looming lump above his supporting hills, and his mouth is filled with the ugliness of anger. Indeed, it is well for Japan that his rage continues unappeasable. For, slowly a volcano is said to be rising in Tokio Bay, and only the vented rage of Asama-yama and of Oshima, the smoking island south of Nippon, prevents the explosion of cataclysmal violence from erupting amid the quiet waters, and sending Yokohama and the capital in powder to the blackened vaults of heaven. As long, however, as Earth can speak through the mouths of Oshima and Asama-yama, the great cities may hope for a continuance of their peace; but, should the two volcanoes fall simultaneously silent, then the pent violence of the inner fires will find some new and swift outlet. Hardly a year ago Oshima sank into quiet; but the safety of Tokio was assured by the unceasing gusts of smoke that poured with augmented virulence from the wide crater of Asama-yama. Now, both mountains are vociferating up to heaven, and

the clangour of their wrath troubles the quiet of the sky. Asama-yama dominates the plain at his feet. Before his anger the ground trembles and moans; the solid hills quake before him, and, in his convulsions, he spews forth fire and death over the desolate region, and fills midday with the infernal darknesses of night. Though his devastating passions rage only from time to time, yet his muttered anger abides for ever, and his sulphurous breath thickly defiles the azure depths of the air. At dawn he stands stern and clear, spouting forth that heavy and unctuous coil of bellying fume; but, as day lightens, the smoke curls on itself, and descends densely upon the volcano in blanketing clouds, till the whole mass of the mountain is obscured from our sight by the massive vapour of his own exhalations. He is lost behind an impenetrable veil, and only a muffled roar or some sudden thrill of the ground betrays the neighbourhood of the tyrannous portent.

Unattractive and sterile as is Karuizawa, its district has retired nooks of charm, where the weary come from Tokio for coolth in summer. Up among the wooded hills, over high cliffs and crags curtained with crimson primula, stands above an abyssm the monastery of Komuro. Far beneath its precipice foams the river, beneath the tangled banks of verdure and flowers. The monastery perches on a peak above the roaring world. The monks offer rest and refuge to the wanderer, who, after tasting the peace of the

holy hills, returns at last to Karuizawa, and thence, from under the iron frown of Asama-yama, to the gleaming warmth, the geniality, the luxurious living of the South.

## XXV

### THE CIRCUIT OF THE HOLY ONE

FROM Gotemba a rickety tram-line wanders over the rolling hills towards Yoka-Ichiba. The downs are bare, clothed with grass and flowers. The landscape is vast and plain; from the centre of its immensities goes sweeping towards heaven the enormous majesty of Fuji-yama. His presence dwarfs all creation, annihilates all perspective. His lower slopes are bedded with impenetrable forests, but their great trees make nothing more than the effect of a velvet drapery across the heaving flanks of the mountain. There is in the whole expanse no standard of measurement; across the earth hills rise and fall without suggestion of their size beneath the tremendous pyramid, whose daunting vastness forbids all consideration of other heights.

Over tract after tract of moorland winds the tram-way, through thickets of flaming azalea, across stretches of wild open ground, past tiny hamlets among the clustered trees, towards the highest point of the pass. Everywhere are flowers: blue lithospermum, twinkling gold of crepis, pale Solomon's

seal. The sky is clear and full of a spacious serenity, and over all hangs the presence of the mountain. At last the height is reached, whence the way descends swiftly upon Yoka-Ichiba, on the further side of the downs that look so puny, but are in reality so commanding. The steep slopes are thick with herbage; here we set eyes upon the glowing slipper of *Cypripedium macranthum*. Dotted on the hillside are his rosy blossoms; he loves the soil, composed of mere volcanic refuse, soft powder of ash and cinder, tender and warm in the sunlight. His wings are wide and twisted, veined with crimson on a ground of glistening white; his broad dorsal sepal is waved with the same colour; his lip hangs, a bellying pouch of marbled rose. He wears one flower or two on his leafy stem. He has a solid elegance; he is sturdy and beautiful among the rank grasses of the hills. Yoka-Ichiba lies upon the plain of moorland, a little village beneath the eye of the holy Fuji-san. Thence across the fields we wander to Lake Funats', where a boat is to convey us on our way to Shoji. The path winds over a tangled heath of low shrubs, with only here and there a rare pine towering grim and gaunt in its loneliness from the wind-swept barrens. So at last we come to the shore, and there take boat. As we sweep out upon the broad waters, comes into sight once more, over the obstructing houses, the tremendous peak that is the centre of our gaze throughout the country. Far above trees and

village stands into the immovable azure the perfect outline of the mountain.

Funats' is only one link in a chain of lakes, owing their existence to a convulsion of the volcano in the steaming days of the world. For the old hills of Japan form themselves here into a sequence of curves, each curve enclosing a bay of low woodland. There they stood, the primeval hills, in a series of connected semicircles across the level land. Then suddenly one day the solid world roared and was cloven. Straight from the wide plain leapt a vomiting cone of fire. So was born Fuji the Holy. Through the centuries he defiled the world with heat and smoke. Then one day a greater wrath came upon him. From his heart came welling a river of red and liquid flame. The great flow of lava descended across the placid lands and came to the old range of hills. Lapping against the horns of each semicircle, the slow lava stayed and hardened, leaving the bays intact within the curves of the mountains. So in the void space all waters were dammed from exit: from behind by the enfolding semicircles of the hills, in front by the new barrier of lava subtending every arc. Accordingly in the spaces lakes were formed, which now extend, a glittering chain, under the ancient range, filling the hollows. Of these lakes Funats' is one, and over a steep neck lies another, Nishi-no-Ume. Beyond this the lava has irrupted into the hills, and our way lies through a dense jungle. Overhead is a close

and uniform canopy of green, and in the dim light our feet fall with a soft and deadened sound upon the pathway among the lava blocks. The darkness is oppressive and exhausting. Beneath the bushes comes no clear air, only reverberating tremors of the brilliant heat outside, rendered now more crushing and irresistible by the impenetrable thickness of the trees. The path lies over and among the blocks of lava. They are floor to this low corridor of verdure. Everywhere lie their blistered masses covered with leprous lichens. In the rotting, sweating silence of the steamy woodland the path winds on through the dimness. Occasionally it emerges upon some break of the jungle, where the lava lies nude and bare under the sky, tumbled into masses of blasted pumice. These beds of heaped refuse from the world's heart have a grim wickedness of ugliness. They are grey and gaunt, seared and ashen with the white fires of hell. Their foul surfaces are furry with a growth of moss, whose livid grey harmonises perfectly with the blighted tone of the rocks. Beyond the clearing again begins the jungle, and far above the trees stands the cone of the mountain looking out over the desolation of his own making. On the soundless earth, composed of leaves dead and rotten from a hundred centuries, grow in the dank darkness queer little orchids, morbid ladies, exquisite in modulated contrasts of unwholesome brown and green. The soil is a spongy tissue of

corruption steaming in the heavy gloaming. Its growths suffer all the contagion of its putrescence. They are evil and unnatural; their colours have adopted the unclean suggestion of their circumstances. At last the lava jungle debouches upon a coppice filled with maiden-hair, and by degrees the path reaches open ground.

At our feet lies a lake. On its further shore stands a promontory bearing a white building. This is Shoji with its hotel. The track keeps under the sheltering hills. On the other side projects the lava flow, whose ragged edges lacerate the shore. Dark reefs of lava trouble the silent water, and the bank is fringed with a dense mass of sombre pines, the van of the lava forest. What spot on earth can rival the loveliness of Shoji? Perched upon its pinnacle, the hotel commands a wide prospect over the lake to the forested shore. Thence the eye follows the slow sweep of the woodland away to its end high on the slope of Fuji. Behind the hotel rise very steeply the primitive hills. They also are rich with trees; beneath their shadow grows the white peony, and on the shelving banks of grass in open places the cypripedium. Beneath us, through the boughs, the lake sparkles away towards the darkness of its further shore, and above all, dominating the distance, stands the Ineffable Majesty. From Shoji our way lies up the range of hills. The climb is agonising under the shafts of a pitiless sun beating down upon the unpro-

tected grass, or gathering double volume in the breathless densities of forest. At first for a little we skirt the lake. In the placidity of daybreak the water sleeps without a ripple. And before us are two holy mountains, for, upon the breast of the lake are reflected with a softness of faultless accuracy the dim distance of forest, the converging curves, the snowy glories of Fuji. Thence the way turns off across a sapphire wilderness of *Iris sibirica*, and up into the intricacies of the forest. All humanity's toils have an end. After a long persistence of perspiring ardour we arrive upon the crest of the ridge. Here are grass, orchids, and nodding bells of blossom. Beneath us lies the precipice of forest dropping sheer down upon the hotel. Beneath us lies exposed the whole configuration of the country. Our gaze roams for miles innumerable over the broad earth. Distinct is the curving chain of the ancient hills with their inserted jewels of blue water. But, most clear and wonderful, the whole sweep of the lava-flow lies clearly mapped out before us. We can see its full extent, the rich, velvety curve from its origin upon the mountain-side, rolling downwards, descending with a slow majesty of development, expanding fan-like across the valley and closing in a broad semi-circle against the horns of the opposing hills. The flow is heavy with a forest rich and dense, of colours and growths distinct from the other woodlands scattered over the landscape. The lava-jungle

descends the mountain-side and out across the lower lands in innumerable gradations of soft tones in blue and purple. Through the haze of distance the imperial volume of its sweep has a dusky glow of tint. Its descending lines seem to be cut from some richly sombre material. It has a heavy grace, a faultless precision of movement that suggest a mantle of sweeping velvet. It rolls with almost visible motion over the unbroken curve of mountain and plain, confounding all into the unity of its own majestic descent. From the height at which we stand distances are doubled. Very far indeed must the eye travel from the fringe of the lava-cloak against the waters immediately beneath us, across the long stretches of its skirt, shot with warm browns and blues in the mists of morning, towards its contracting lines far up Fujiyama's side, to the august shoulder from which it trails. In the receding remoteness detail becomes blurred and obliterated, till at last the eye follows the velvet vestment to its origin upon the mountain and loses itself in the softening mists of the high distance. For from this point the far-off Fuji stands supreme in the zenith, looming glorious in the vague opalescence of the sky. Seen across the quivering haze of sunlit distance, and from so great a height, the mountain takes a tremendous aspect of unearthly loftiness. He fills the radiant air with his authority. Far, far behind him stretch into the indistinguishable im-

mensities pale wreaths of vapour that are coast and headland of Japan. But the Holiness, blocking the wide sky, rules the prospect, and the skirts of his majesty sweep across the wide country to our very feet, where, below us, the lakes glitter like a chain of diamonds fringing the hem of the mountain's robe.

Turning, the other prospect is not less wonderful. With our backs to Fuji we look away over the precipitous abysms of hill and dale to range upon range of blue ridges dimly outlined in the receding distance. High above them all lies clear along the sky, a mighty line of snow and ice and massive rock. This great wall of mountain is the backbone of Japan. These are the central peaks, the oldest creation of the land. They rise into no marked or splendid pinnacle; their majesty lies in the severity, the tremendous bulk of their height, their crested battlements far up against the dia-phanois blue. Their sovereign is Ontake San, the Holy, the second mountain of Japan, to whose sacro-sanctity the pious make pilgrimages through the summer. On his topmost point dwells a powerful divinity, who possesses his worshippers and fills them with a divine essence. Ontake stands rugged, rude, overpowering in the mass of his splendour, many scores of miles across the steep rise and fall of hill and valley. The whole range is clear to sight. We might be looking from Darjiling to the Himalaya. Descending the ridge, we drop from sight of the

world's Miracle, and now down and down through wooded slopes, where little becks sparkle among cataracts of white cluster roses, to the low lands of civilisation. At last, after a knee-breaking perseverance in descent, we come upon cultivated ground, little fields of rice, little villages lying silent under the blasting sun of a Japanese afternoon. Far behind now, and out of sight, behind the mountainous verdure of the forest, lie the splendours of the Holy One. We shall not sight him again for many weary miles. So on we go and on, till at last another descent brings us down into the valley of the roaring river. The backward view has closed in upon us like the magic forests of fairy-tale. Wave upon rolling wave of woodland fills the background, foaming higher and higher to the furthest crests of the distance. Now the sun, though still dominant, is blocked from sight by the mountains across the river. Gradually the twilight advances over the broad stream, brawling in its stony bed. The evening is dull and sombre, filled with a chill foreboding of hostility. Only on some of the loftiest peaks behind linger roseate flashes of the sunlight. But the river's valley lies cheerless and cold in the colourless chill of greyness. Objects assume a lucent pallor as dusk draws down. Stones, river, trees, take a white transparency of note in the gloaming. They become spectral in the gathering darkness.

In the pale dawn of the next day we await upon

the wide shore of pebbles the boat that is to take us sixty miles down the roaring rapids to the sea. The air is greenish and cold ; in the solemn light the river foams onwards, yellow and turbulent. At last our boat comes dancing down upon the waves. It is an enormous construction, built of the thinnest wood imaginable, and heaped with bales and logs. Its beams give and yield to every sally of the water. So the voyage begins. Away the bark whirls dizzily upon the wheeling surfaces of the yellow waves. Over smooth stretches the vessel moves forward with a stealthy grace of speed, buoyant and birdlike on the water. Then succeeds a roaring cataclysm of noise and foam. There the frail wooden thing leaps and tosses in fury, each plank resilient to the assaulting billows which break high and over the vessel as it agonises amid their turmoil. Then in a quiet corner of ominous stillness, black under a precipice, the river moves with a secret violence of swiftness in which our vessel is caught like a straw and whirled breathlessly upon its way. The boatmen sheer off the rocks with long poles of bamboo, and their tact in water-craft is our sole protection from drowning. Meanwhile, as the day warms into light, the country goes sailing past us rapidly as in a dream. On either side are hills rugged and commanding, misty with blue, and patches of golden corn. Sometimes we glide through placable lands of field and wood, sometimes between the gates of some cloven precipice,

round whose angle the water pours in a race of frenzy. Emerging from these straits, we leave behind the grimness of cliffs and drowze in the young daylight, through a gentle interval of peace, whose banks are heavy with forest. The prospect has a warm and dreamy loveliness of youth, as the visions come and pass. We recline upon our bales and resign ourselves to the Nirvana of happy contemplation. Gradually the hills diminish, civilisation makes itself more frequently obvious, and the quieting waters warn us that now we are drifting down towards the sea. The river grows broad and broader. Suddenly, in a wide angle, sweeps a tributary. Along it floats a squadron of square-sailed boats, and overhead, far above the dip between the wooded slopes, comes at last into sight once more the August Mountain, imperial and divine as ever. For a while he keeps in view, then passes behind an interrupting range. Now the hill country lies very far behind us, a mere ragged panorama of blues, in fold after fold of beautiful colour, following the convolutions of the river into the fastnesses of its source among the highest Alps. As the retrospect fades in the delicacies of distance, Day comes fully up over the tranquil world. But her first glamour of tenderness is repented. Day comes sad and sullen, with the whisper of malicious winds and the level grey of hopelessness. Then, as we near the coast and come towards our destination, her sorrow culminates in tears, and, weeping with a

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steady bitterness, she watches the final stage of our journey with implacable eyes. The waters now are stilled from all their turbulence. They are very wide and still. The boat moves with motion imperceptible across the flawless surface of the river's estuary, and thence along a tiny canal between flowery banks into the little village where we are to alight and take the train. So we bid the river farewell, and are soon spinning through the rice fields under the rain towards Miyanoshita, dripping amid its heavy woods. As for Fuji, that high and holy personage has retired into the utter seclusion of cloud. Of him we have had our last vision for the time.

## XXVI

### MIYANOSHITA, HAKONÉ, ATAMI

M IYANOSHITA is the rhapsodising ground of the tourist. The best discoverable reason is the excellence of its hotel, where the cooking and the cellar are calculated to mollify judgment and exorcise dullness. The other beauties of the place are not commensurate with its reputation. Miyanoshita lies in a high cul-de-sac of the hills. All around hangs a suffocating weight of verdure. The prospect everywhere is of ponderous green. To reach Hakoné over the hills from Miyanoshita, the wanderer's pony scrambles up and up over the tangled acclivities of the forest, pressing through jungles, dense growth of pines, and waving plumes of bamboo, in whose under-growth lilies are crowded. Through the long and serried aisles of the bamboo canes, that support a vault of immovable darkness with all the air of minster pillars propping up the holy gloom, dimly the lilies bend and wave. They are the reverent congregation in this cathedral's dusk. Gradually we struggle forth upon the open uplands. Far below us now Miyanoshita lies buried in its woods. Before us goes rolling

the wide champaign towards Hakoné. On a bare stretch of reeded moorland between two hills is Ashi-no-yu, where, among the sedge, bubbles up with steam the volcanic fountain, hot and sulphurous. Ashi-no-yu is the summit of the pass. Thence, running the gauntlet of the two hills, we pass above a little lake in the interval, and so, down over open slopes, towards Hakoné in the further hollow. By the little lake just off the road stands in a coppice the famous monolithic colossus of the Buddha Jizo. Carved from the living rock, the Holy One is immobile, lost in meditation. Behind his head is the aureole of Buddhahood. His limbs are composed into eternal peace, one mutilated arm lifted in benediction. But the Jizo of Hakoné has not the beauty with which it is the fashion to credit him. His smile is slightly sly, fatuous, and silly. It is almost a grin, with wicked, laughing eyes. He has none of that majesty of loveliness possessed by the Buddha Amida at Kamakura, or the Buddha Shaka at Shiba. He is merely mundane. Our impression may owe its harshness to the fact that by his pedestal stood a tiny British tourist of the most virulent cockney type, armed with a camera. With him was a greasy Japanese guide, in cap and knickerbockers; also the tourist's wife, a portentous woman with a sharp nose, a masterful eye, and a Tyrolean hat. Addressing this vast female, her spouse adjured her to stand on one side of the Buddha; this achieved, he commanded

the ape-like guide to stand on the other. The air was rich with dropped aitches and corrupted vowels. Then, as they stood one on either side of the Eternal, that portly English matron, with her look of hard superiority, and the wizened guide, with no calves to his legs, that unspeakable tourist photographed the Jizo of Hakoné.

Down over the rolling slopes the track falls away towards Hakoné. Coming at last to woodland, this leads us to the shores of the lake. Under an uncertain sky the lake of Hakoné has the colour of steel. The famous view lacks its climax ; for, looking out across the pale waters to the voluminous hills beyond, with their opportune dip, the eye sees nothing but vacancy behind them. The Holy One, whose glory from this spot compels adoration from the world, is retired into a sulky impenetrability of cloud. No one would so much as guess at his existence. So we turn away from Hakoné, and up into the winding mountains, towards the Pass of the Ten Provinces, whence we are to drop into Atami down the steep slopes that envelope her golden bay. The path winds tempestuously upwards and upwards. Gradually the prospect widens, unfolds, reveals itself on every side. Now we are looking up towards Kamakura and Enoshima : now back into the central mountains and the clouds over Fuji-yama. The way runs for the most part through copse and jungle of bushes. Then, as the further heights are reached,

woodland gives way to vast stretches of open ground, rolling away towards the upland in glimmering ripples of colour. Then even the grass grows short and wiry, starred with tiny yellow flowers, too sensible to affront the wind by the ostentation of a stalk. At last, after a climb of hours, creeps into sight the topmost point of the pass. On the domed summit of the hill we stop to realise the world. From this high place earth lies unrolled as a chart. Beneath our feet the hill falls away in a succession of steep bounds to the yellow crescent of Atami Bay, upon whose sands the long Pacific rollers are crashing in amid the whiteness of foam. Then to the right lie deployed fold upon fold of blue and glowing distance—headland, island, coastline, away and away into the mist of distance. To the left we have the panorama of the shore and country stretching northward to the capital, round the wide circuit of Tokio Bay. Dimly through the haze we see the promontory of Enoshima. Countless other curves of shore and cape make a fringe for the pale silken sapphire of the sea. A golden glamour of afternoon fills the air. Behind us lies Japan. Turning we see the enormous network of the mountains. In every direction their scope, their masses lie developed. On them also lies the softness of rich light. They run and ripple and foam across the world in arrested breakers of hazy blue and gold. They take a diaphanous softness of tone. Their colours have

a liquid translucence. Their ranges, too, are seen to have a central unity forming into one gigantic whole. Their waves, crashing disorderly across the country, seem to be gathered to one nucleus, all to draw to one spot, whose dominion compels their reckless disarray into an ordered and harmonised scheme. Each billowing chain of peaks leads up to the great central elevation, and the hills seem to gather their united forces for the ultimate leap into clear heaven. For, high and supreme above the earth and the tumbled mountains, glows like a radiant pearl the divine Fuji-yama. Clouds still float ragged round his throne and crown, but one by one he tears them away and prepares to reveal his entire glory. Far up among the drifting vapours the great cone is the lodestone and centre of all the jostling ranges round his feet. To him they all conduce, in him the whole splendour of the world culminates. He is glorified now as never before; dim, ethereal, warm with a limpid tenderness of colour, he towers dreamily amid the clouds, and the delicate irradiance of afternoon light gives him a delicacy of loveliness kindred to the clouds themselves. He seems only an aspiring cloud, gloriously made eternal, like the chorus of Aristophanes. Far, far away in the floating distances he has the colour of a pale amethyst through which the sun is shining. He is altogether transparent in the flowing light. He seems to live and glow with ecstatic being. He is no longer merely

the Mountain, he becomes a deity made manifest upon earth.

So from the ridge we descend upon Atami. Steeply down and down drops the path under the blazing glare. We have left the winds behind in occupation of the summit. The way is diverse; for some time we pass among low scrub blue with mastacanthus, thence into a dell of boscage, dark and tangled. At one point we come upon an old and mossy shrine. Its gates are guarded by a fearful devil of stone, on whom the light falls in patches through the overshadowing trees. In another corner of the courtyard is a convocation of tiny Buddhas and holy saints. They cluster thickly, to the number of at least a hundred. They are very ancient. They are robed in moss, and time has abraded their noses. But still, though their features be gone, remains the smile, vague and pathetic, upon each little blurred face, beneath the dancing light through the boughs. There they sit for ever in that nook of shadow, meditating, meditating. Their life is peaceful and gentle. They are pleased with simple offerings of fruit and flowers, and nature treats them with tenderness, softening their return to the Nirvana of annihilation. Peaceful we leave them in their cool retreat, and out again into the sun and the glaring descent to Atami. In its deep hollow lies the little town, fringing the golden sands. From the Pacific breathes in an air of health and strength to relieve the oppression of heat that

otherwise would reign. The bay is a close semi-circle held in by a bow of precipitous hills. Rich with verdure is the town, luxuriant, calm, beautiful. In its midst stands the famous geyser which supplies the healing baths, and has stated hours for eruption. Proceeding to the spot at the time appointed, we find a seared and blackened space enclosed by an iron rail. In its centre is the blistered orifice of the fountain. As the hour approaches rumblings and subterranean detonations are heard. Then ensues an abortive spurt of steam, accompanied by shrill sibilations. Meanwhile the minutes slip by and matters requiesce. Then again the same performance is repeated, with the additional attraction of a boiling wave that rushes into sight and then retreats. So pass many long moments. We, having come out to see a spire of spuming water leap ebullient some thirty feet into the air, become peevish before so puny an exhibition. However, the manifestations, instead of developing, decrease, and at last we realise that the geyser has no intention of performing for our benefit. After nearly an hour of impatient attention we return home, bitterly revolving the uncertainty of all things mortal, and deciding that geysers are as little trustworthy as princes.

From Atami to Odawara runs a curious coast railway. Its track dips and undulates along the indentations of hills by the sea. Each car is hauled and pushed up the incline by coolies, and then

allowed to run down the next hill on its own impulse. This is represented by many as a breathless and hair-raising experience. We had confidently anticipated that we "should feel our lives in our hands," according to the expression of some excitable lady. In point of fact the performance is tame to the last degree. The cars groan up one slope, then from the summit gently slide down the next. Their motion is always calm, and their speed is never excessive. One feels one's life far more thrillingly imperilled when one has exchanged this railway for the whirling precipitance of a real train. At Odawara we are released from these imminent dangers and alight.

Devious, indeed, are the ways of a Japanese inn : for keepers of hotels the Present does not exist ; their life is spent in the Future. Entering the hall after the removal of shoes, we ask for a room to rest and eat. This at least we can have. Up the steep wooden stairway we are led, and thence into a matted, clean room of exquisite woodwork, to which cushions are shortly brought for our comfort. Then we proceed to discuss food. Yes, we can undoubtedly have oysters, lobsters, and salmon. Yes, they will be ready immediately. Yes, the honourable hunger of their August Highnesses shall be appeased in the twinkling of a humble eye. So retires O Kami San of the inn, and we possess our ravening souls in impatience. Slowly trail the minutes into hours, and still nothing occurs. In

desperation we clap our hands for an Elder Sister. Faint little remote voices answer sweetly, "Hai," in low, protracted wails. Then follows on the answer an Elder Sister. Reverently understanding that we demand food instantly, she acquiesces with joyful humility. "Tadaima, tadaima," she murmurs; but we knowing that "tadaima"—accursed word—the motto of Japan, means "presently" (which, being interpreted, signifies "at any convenient moment between this and doomsday") protest with passionate corrections of "Iye, iye; ima, ima" ("No, no; now, now"). The handmaid bows. Is it possible, she says, that she should keep the honourable Serenities waiting for a moment? No, she will retire, and our venerable wishes shall be promptly satisfied. So she goes. Again the languishing moments lengthen into an appalling vista of starvation. More infuriate clapping of hands, followed by propitiatory cries of "Hai." Then re-enter the Elder Sister, provided with three little cups, a teapot, and three minute white wafers. What is this but the cruelty of insult? We ardently reiterate our needs. She is confounded in remorse. "But presently, quite, quite presently, the Noble Augustnesses shall have their glorified food." Feeling that protest is useless, we sink back into despair, while Elder Sister with humble prostrations backs out of the room. More agonising hours, stung to a fresh bitterness by the provocative futilities of the pale tea and the wafers. At last nature can bear

no more; eat we must or die. And soon our train will be claiming us. In a last passion we clap, trying to fill our summons with pathos and appeal. Re-enter Elder Sister, wreathed in smiles. We ask with voices full of tears and weak desperation, whether we are ever to have that food, which we had been told to expect so promptly. She beams upon us and answers with a surprised but gentle intonation, "Food honourably is it? Tadaima, tadaima." We collapse. Hope is dead. Gathering our baggage, we pay our bill, in broken spirit, and make for the station, where we try to solace hunger with buns of bean-paste. These we swallow in loathing as our train bears us across the wide country past Enoshima and Kamakura; past Shidzuoka, where Iyeyasu spent his later years and died, back at last into the blessed capital.

## XXVII

### THE PASSING OF DAYS

SUMMER draws on over Tokio in a linked chain of golden days and velvety, fragrant nights. The hours drift by in a ripe idleness, which leaves us speechless with shame before the indignant question of some energetic lady, breathless from her trottings up and down Japan. "But what do you DO all day?" she asks in an accusing voice. What do we do? Really, what *do* we do? There is the question. Well, in the first place, and the second place, and the last place,—we enjoy ourselves—enjoy ourselves from dawn to dusk; and we defy anyone to find an occupation more entralling, more educational, more improving. Never do we go out to see, but our eyes are for ever busy with things beautiful. Never do we study tomes of history, grammar, or topography, yet our consciousness is gradually steeped in all the rich charm of Japanese life—in fact, we derive incessant edification from the diligent pursuit of mere attentive idleness. And so the days pass.

At waking there is the hackneyed but never-failing

delight of the bath, gradually boiling, followed by breakfast in our wide room, open to all the air of heaven. While the dishes are bringing, we walk abroad in our garden and absorb the genial warmth. Then come merchants of silk or ivory or china. Half the morning is spent in elaborate bargaining and conversation. Then, donning shoes, we sally forth in search of some new thing. Perhaps we go a-shopping down towards the moat, dipping into tiny obscure caverns, and exploring the mysteries of each rolled-up picture, which promises so much and often reveals so little. Laden with memories of a thousand little street scenes, we loiter back towards our lunch, and afterwards, summoning Mr. Desire, we career away to Shiba, Uyeno, or Asakusa, where the afternoon consumes itself insensibly. Or, if a starched fit take one, on stated days there are lovely ladies at the Legations, who offer tea of European manufacture to the privileged. Then down the hill in the glamour of a rosy sunset, Mr. Desire whirls us pleasantly again through the warm, scented air of evening. Scented indeed is the air of Tokio by day and night—with subtle flower-scents often, and still more often with drains; for along the edge of each street flows an open runnel of sewage, being the sole sanitation of the city. When summer is hot and dry, each householder lays the dust in front of his residence from this fragrant rivulet. He scoops up the lymph of the drain and ladles it generously forth

upon the thirsty road. This is how he keeps the air before his door fresh and cool. But they are very lovable, these streets of Tokio, for all their little drawbacks, and especially are they pleasant in the calm of the evening, as Mr. Desire convoys us home-wards, where we dine with windows all retracted, to an accompaniment of shrill, high bugle-calls from the Aoyama barracks overhead. Then, renewed, we sally forth to the Palace of the Thousand New Delights, and round off our day amid the laughter and graces of Little Willow Tree. This, O Murray-minded lady, is our day, as opposed to yours of diligent sight-seeing and personally conducted inspections.

Each season, too, has its peculiar joys. January brings the bustling jollity of New Year; the streets are thronged with parti-coloured babies, tumbling, howling, laughing, toddling down the road, each radiant in the new clothes that every child in Japan must assume with the New Year. None so poor as to endure the disgrace of appearing on these days in last year's garments. Each door is fronted by twin pine trees for luck, inserted into the roadway; and one's servants offer small presents, and waving boughs, to which are affixed by strings the quaintest toys made in painted rice-paste. From each twig hovers a roseate kitten or pale-green fishes or little twy-coloured bubbles of the confection. Peepshows parade the streets, and mummers amass pence with their devil-drama. We hear a gong terrifically boom-

ing from some dark shop whose front is obscured by a crowd. Approaching, we peer in, but for a moment or so little is visible but exciting darkness. Then we make out a monstrous something couched and dormant in a corner. It is a devil—but a portentous devil, with fearful jaws and serried ranks of gilded teeth. His mask is wonderfully, intricately carved, with all the strenuous grotesqueness of Japanese invention. His fierce eyes, beneath his horribly knitted brows, are closed in sleep; then they open drowsily, gleaming with black and gold in the flaming scarlet of his diabolical countenance. The crowd shivers as the monster, disguised, for the rest, in a heavy mantle of fur, stirs from his dreams with hungry champing of his jaws. Enter another mummer, masked to represent an old woman. Wonderfully bland is her expression, and a handkerchief knotted beneath her chin completes her disguise. She is a stranger to the enchanted spot, and the drama consists of her overtures and approaches to the devil. She thinks him a dog—a foolish old woman this—and draws near to pat him. Horribly, indeed, then does he gape and snarl at her. She leaps away, but soon ventures close enough to poke at him with a wand. At last, with gradual upheavals, does the monster fully awake. He glares upon her and growls with rage, slowly rolling his eyes, and advancing with snapping jaws. So the play continues in alternations of humour and terror till the mummers think the audience has had its

money's worth. Then they jump back into modern life, and while the mob disperses, one collects their pence and another beats up the folk with his gong for a second performance.

On the 3rd of March is the birthday of all the daughters of Japan. For it is considered that every girl-child officially sees the light on that same day, and from that date is her age reckoned. So that if she actually appears on the 2nd of March there is no help for it, but she must be considered to be two years old on the 4th. Or if her real birthday be the 6th or 7th, the poor little soul has to be nearly twelve months old before she can be recognised as born at all. The season is one of festivity, though of festivities inferior to that of the 5th of May, the birthday of all the boys in the empire. On that day Tokio is gay with huge fishes swimming in air. These are vast hollow balloons open at either end, and shaped to imitate the koi-fish. Their colours are scarlet and orange, with gilded eyes. Their great round mouths are held distended by a hoop of iron, and thus they are fixed on tall poles above the housetop. The wind fills their bellies, and they waver realistically and undulate in the breeze, in every respect like true fat fishes flapping their way against the stream. Each household is supposed to erect one of these for every son born to the family. Over some buildings, therefore, the air has the aspect of an aquarium ; and generally throughout this week it is hard to find in

Tokio a private building that does not rejoice in one or more such fishes. The intention is emblematic. The koi-fish is a sturdy swimmer, and the idea is that, even as he breasts the strong currents of the stream, even so each male child of Japan is to show himself sturdy and brave in breasting the stormy currents of life. For the girls there is no such pomp and parade—their birth is of so little importance. However, for their benefit the streets are filled with stalls where battledores are sold. These battledores are shaped like small tennis-rackets, squared at the corners. The handle is lapped in black velvet, and on one flat wooden face is roughly dashed a crude and vivid design of cherry or camellia. To the other is artfully affixed a figurine composed of padded brocades, cut and fitted with the most perfect accuracy. Here are great ladies of long ago—princesses and courtesans, beauties of palace or Yoshiwara—sweeping across their background of painted silk in flowing robes as glorious as ever they wore in life. Each fold, each underskirt is arranged with the most absolute precision, and these gowns are rounded and padded till their wearers have a look of very life. As for design and colour, not the richest vestments of Oiran could do more than vie with these exquisitely modelled queens of the battledore. They flow abroad in saffron, silver, rose, emerald, amethyst, and violet; sumptuous patterns enrich each separate kimono, one upon another, sometimes only hinted by the

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merest line of gold or salmon brocade. Their colours are daintily harmonised and blended, while for each lady half a score of tints and materials are employed. With one such battledore is each little girl presented, according to the means of her friends. The more silken and sumptuous are beyond reach of the very poor ; they must be content with cotton backgrounds and cruder colours. But each small girl is to rejoice in some model of famous beauty or courtesan, or, perhaps, celebrated heroine of the tragic stage, with eyebrows fearfully contorted, and long, delicate hands writhing dramatically. More rarely the racquet bears some scowling hero bedizened in gold and armour. It is, of course, on the painted side only that the children play battledore and shuttlecock up and down the crowded streets. The elegant ladies are kept safe for contemplation. The shuttlecocks are little springless things made of a gilded dab of clay, and feathered in various ingenious devices of coloured plumage. The games have endless rules ; in some every failure to return the shuttlecock is visited on the offender by a strip of plaster fastened across his face. At this season the streets of Tokio offer the aspect of a hospital for the wounded.

Then there are the wrestlers, fat or thin—that is to say, popular or aristocratic. Attached to such noble families as still cling to the old ideas, is often a professor of jiu-juts'—the marvellous art of wrestling which consists in so perfectly balancing your own

muscles that your enemy, without any effort of yours, whatever he may do, automatically overthrows himself. To tell of the thing sounds a fairy-tale—to witness it is little short of a miracle. There was a famous professor—a dear and precious man, with rich curling beard of brown and great limpid eyes full of kindly geniality—who used to give lessons to our friends in the Keisats' on Aoyama. He was of a famous princely house, whose sons he taught. He presented us to the heads of his clan, and they invited us to witness their tournaments in the wrestling-place of the family. There we were received by our courteous hosts, timid in their innocence of English, and watched their small cousins—boys of twelve—wrestling with grown men and overthrowing them. Of course the art is a matter of trick made marvelously perfect through many ages. At the appointed moment you harden a muscle, you twitch a limb, and over goes your enemy, irresistibly overbalanced by natural forces. The thing is astonishingly fatal, astonishingly simple of appearance, absolutely deadly. It would be impossible of practice at home. For if death is to be avoided, both combatants must know exactly how to fall, in all circumstances; and even so, the fight always, in Japan, must take place upon a floor laid with a double thickness of soft matting. Of course, as to a Japanese invention, it was no object that death should be avoided. For this art, in its origin, was undoubtedly lethal—a combat

*à outrance.* The battle does not end with a fall. Having thrown your man, you leap upon him as he lies, and try to strangle him. And if the fallen be the stronger, he may succeed, even at the last moment, in turning the tables and strangling his conqueror. This game has one curious consequence; for all seasoned wrestlers are practised in so hardening the muscles of their throat that no grip can win the slightest purchase. By a muscular contraction they can transform their throat into a stark column, straight from chin to chest, hard as steel, impossible of compression. This sounds a mere Herodotean fiction. It will be found as impeccably true as nowadays is most of Herodotus. Never shall we forget the master-wrestler offering his throat for our grasp. Dig, struggle, claw, fight as our fingers would, they were utterly unable to make the slightest impression, to ensure the feeblest hold upon that adamantine mass of muscle. Of course, no professor of jiu-juts' could ever, by any possibility, be hanged; it is said that they will lie prone on their backs and suffer a beam to be laid transversely across their throat. On either end of this two men will stand, and the wrestler, stiffening his muscle, will, even so, bear their weight on his neck without the slightest discomfort or constriction of the gullet. The strangest of sights it was to see the wrestler, the sweetest of men and mildest, skipping, rubber-like, over the floor, and with the merest twink of some nerve, sending prone his

brawny opponent. Towards him leaps one of his pupils, confident in muscle and agility. Mr. Pinetree awaits him with a beaming smile. We tremble for the imminent overthrow of the little man as his enemy bounds snorting towards him. Then comes a miracle. The enemy is on him. A touch, a feint at the groin, and my Pinetree slips unobtrusively backwards with finger-tips on his adversary's shoulders. And his enemy goes hurtling through the air for a dozen feet or more, and crashes prone to the ground at last, rolling heels over head in the abandonment of utter ruin. Mr. Pinetree beams upon him still with the coolest benevolence. And, at will, he could easily make such a fall fatal. There are many secrets of the wrestling school that are only taught a pupil after many long and bitter tests have rendered his temper absolutely proof. Otherwise, in the heat of irritation, he might become blood-guilty before he well knew what had happened. But a dear man and a kindly is Mr. Pinetree, in whose hands the life of a sucking kitten would be safe.

When wrestling wearies, there is the theatre. Danjuro offers entertainment, or Sada Yakko. But Sada Yakko is one of those many prophets who have had to cross the sea to find honour. In her own land the notion of a woman coming upon the stage is as unthinkable as it would ever have been to the creators of Desdemona, Vittoria, or Alice Arden. So Japan thinks nothing of her. She plays Des-

demona, too. The production lasted from six in the morning, it was said, to somewhere nearing midnight. Those arriving after lunch found the scene on the battlements of Cyprus in full performance, and a couple of hours brought them to the drunken scene. The wise, then, took this immortal drama in minute instalments. It is not on record that any European saw the thing through from opening to close. Iago held forth to Cassio in honeyed tones. He employed the language of colloquial politeness. His friend was Kimi—meaning prince—while he spoke of himself as Boku (fool). [This is the proper form among young men of gentle standing—till Kimi has come to be mere Japanese for “you,” and Boku for “I.”] Iago was neatly clad in the most speckless of white serge yachting-suits. He flourished a cane, and his head was covered with the smartest of straw hats. As for Cassio, he was in a modern lieutenant’s uniform. To them, after endless dialogue, enter Kawakami as Othello—a portly and rubicund person, adorned in the full splendour of a general in the Japanese army—epaulettes, képi, and all. They proceed to fill up the time with a review. To and fro, across the stage, wheel and deploy a body of Japanese soldiers, looking as if they had marched straight from the Aoyama Barracks to the scene of war in Cyprus. Flourish of trumpets. Attention. Enter Sada Yakko as Desdemona—Desdemona in a Paris toque crowning frizzy hair, and the latest

thing in Paris frocks of black chiffon, touched with rose. She swings a fluffy French parasol, and behind her come two waiting-maids in kimono, with Japanese handbags and umbrellas. Tableau. Reunion of husband and wife. Othello, to mark his rapture, advances towards his new-made bride and firmly shakes hands with her. Then, feeling possibly that his action is hardly adequate to the emotional level of the scene (for the Japanese not only never kiss, but have no conception of any outward and physical expression of joy), he gently but decidedly pats her on the shoulder. This scene is shortly followed by that of the intoxication, which apparently takes place, very properly, in the cellar, or some apartment in the basement. This display is intensified and protracted, after its essentials have been carried through with a brilliant realism, by a singularly crude and indecent ballet, intended to provide the Japanese with an accurate picture of dancing as practised in the West. This proved too much for exhausted European patience, and we fled without awaiting the course of many hours that would have brought us to the death-scene. But others who had the luck to come in for it declared that Sada Yakko conquered all the absurd incongruities of her circumstances, and made the agony of Desdemona a piece of supremely tragic art, absolutely faithful and beautiful. But the courage of it! Othello in Japanese, and in modern European garments! Only Sada Yakko could have had the

genius to be natural and convincing in tragedy against such fearful odds.

Not barren, indeed, nor boring, are Tokio days or nights. Whether sitting, garlanded with azalea, by Willow Tree, and joining, a crowned and blossoming Augustus, into "Ama san-ya Re," or viewing the cherry-blossom at frock-coated imperial garden-parties, life is always rich and varied. There is little sport, however, in Japan. Several days' wild roaming in trackless mountains may possibly bring the fortunate into sight of a pheasant, or exalted influence may secure him an invitation to some noble duck-hunt, where the sportsmen stand by the brink of a culvert and catch wild-duck, as they rise, in butterfly-nets; but the country of gentle Buddhas offers little inducement to the more bloody-minded of Westerners, who cannot be really happy without the delight of taking life; though, indeed, Japan relaxes, too, the Holy Rules—eating fish;—and even venison, under the piously fallacious name of "mountain whale." Yet, none the less, placid-tempered is the face of Japan, and to the placid-tempered she presents a calm and dreamy existence of uninterrupted enjoyment. Day drifts past day, unmarked by agony of incident, distinguished only from its successor and its predecessor by some novel detail of pleasure, some variation of shop, or tea-house, or flower. Morning, noon, and dusk, there is one gently flowing procession of leisurely delights. To the stranger from the West,

with a mere week-end to spare, the capital offers indeed a bland and impregnable face, subtle, secretive, and demure as the smile of a Pope. But to the diligent pilgrim of joy, she unfolds from dawn to dark the gradual fulness of her charm. At last he penetrates behind the secrets of her polite grey front, and is admitted to the complete intimacy of her fascination. Then, indeed, he falls captive to the force of her attraction. And none who know her well dare ever to call Tokio dull or plain of visage. She is the fairy city, a sombre crone to them that scorn her in ignorance, but to them that know her, the radiant Princess of Joy, the Living Lady of Glittering Light. From day-star to sunset, she ceaselessly pours forth for her faithful a stream of never-failing pleasures. So, indeed, do the swift hours pass in a dream.

## XXVIII

### SAYONARA

ALL mortal joys have their term ; and, in their transitory nature, lies the prime secret of their keenness. At last the golden months ebb towards their end, and the evil hour of departure draws near. From Japan, away over the illimitable seas, the stern fates call the wanderer homewards. Summer drowzes across the country, in a glory of gold ; the air is heavy with the scented warmth of flowers ; the full tides of life pulse in every blade, in every sigh of the laden air ; through the gilded mists of summer-time Japan lies supine and immobile in the passion of her sleepy contentment. But the filthy ships are coaling for their departure, and the moment of the wanderer approaches.

Ere this the house is packed and folded, left clean for its owner. Bath and kuruma have been despatched across the world, to stand desolate in the corridors of a Yorkshire country house, where British propriety and British independence will for ever forbid their use. With them are gone pictures, china, oddments of eight months' accumulation. The garden has been

stripped of its collected treasures, which have been sent to the kindly Teuton of the great Yokohama nursery, who has promised, in their time, to send them after us to England. Meanwhile, among the domestics depression rules. The cook, indeed, has long left us in hopes of betterment, but his successor prepares meals for his master with sauce of overflowing tears—at least, so Wataguchi informs us. He offers us little gifts—a pan of flowers, to set beside his predecessor's departing offering of an earthenware shell, with an attendant gnome. As for Wataguchi, his demeanour has the old calm gaiety, but his heart proclaims that it is agitated. He has conceived a great desire to accompany his master back to Europe. Many considerations militate against this idea. For one thing, the precious Wataguchi is phthisic of temper. Without doubt in England he would pine and collapse; further, he would probably be unhappy and yearn for his native land; fourthly, what is Madame Wataguchi to do during her husband's Odyssey? Fifthly, there is the momentous question of expense. He replies with wrinkled smiles of devotion that he is healthy, youthful, and strong; that his happiness will never, for a minute, be questionable, so long as he is privileged with his master's company. As for his wife—he turns towards Snow-Lady, occupied in packing—"Wife, she no matter, I pay off wife." He grins with delight. As for Snow-Lady, she bursts into peal upon peal of laughter. Clearly here is the finest jest in the world.

The master is a little horrified at this genial callousness, and objects the expense. But Wataguchi will pay his own fare; what is it? However, on hearing the figures, his smile fades, and a faint whistle puckers his lips instead. Health, age, conjugal ties were of no importance, but financial difficulties are insurmountable. Wataguchi realises that the thing cannot be. Sadly he shakes his head, and resigns himself to remaining in Japan with his wife. Indeed, the responsibility of bringing a sickly and elderly, if delightful, Japanese twelve thousand miles from his native land, to rot and languish in the sunless chills of England, is too heavy a burden for our shoulders. The situation would become impossible. Even a bitter parting is better than a regrettable association. It is best that we should leave our boy behind us. We could not pledge ourselves for the fidelity of our Odysseus to his abandoned Penelope. Through us no happy hearts shall be dissevered. Wataguchi must stay and accompany Snow-Lady upon the long declining journey of her devoted days. So it must be good-bye.

Now all the domestics begin to devise offerings. Mr. Desire presents us, from himself and wife, with coloured fans bearing scenes from Hori-kiri. These he lays before us with indrawn sibilations and obeisance to the ground. Then follows Wataguchi, bearing great collapsing paper lanterns, most delicately painted with landscapes. Snow-Lady has sent them

to us by her lord. That lord himself produces classical sword and dagger for our honour, with promise of a silken kimono for wintry weather. His young brother, that amiable youth devoid of English, sends us a picture postcard, and Wataguchi's father, sacred individual, whose age must be prehistoric, ventures to convey to us his respectful wishes with a present of cakes. All the servants are full of observance and sorrow at our departure. It is cruel to imagine the whole display a matter of courteous routine, performed at the parting from every master, good or bad. Wataguchi, failing himself in the assumption of tragedy, for his wrinkled mask is only made for jollity and laughter, shifts the burden of the rôle on to his wife, and never meets us without proclaiming through brilliant smiles his extreme sorrow at our imminent departure, and the prostrating grief of Snow-Lady. "My wife, she bery sorry," exclaims the beaming Wataguchi. "My wife, she bery cry. Last night I no sleep; all last night my wife, she bery, bery cry." Unflattering truth compels us to own that on inspection Snow-Lady betrays not the slightest departure from her usual adamantine calm. Her eyelids are not red with those hypothetical tears; her cheeks are not wan. Unless her husband had informed us to the contrary, we should have guessed her to be in the full enjoyment of her usual placidity. But, doubtless, he knows best. And if he pronounces her swamped in tears, swamped in tears she must

have been. In any case, our hearts are too soft to refuse conviction of all this gratifying misery spread in honest lives by our departure. Compliments, like gift horses, must not be too rigidly criticised. Let us take the will for the deed—the reported tears for tears actually beheld. In any case, the servants make case enough of our going. They feed us, they smile upon us, with the tearful kindness that one imagines to be shown to a condemned criminal. On every side their kindness is about us. There is no escape from the enveloping atmosphere of their devotion. No doubt they have made their percentages, no doubt they have cheated us and mocked at us; but now, at the last, let us hope that they really liked us just a little, and that all these manifestations are signs of a regret, not wholly feigned, that our association is at an end. Firmly one must believe this; it would be too brutal to doubt the apparent sincerity of their devotion. It must be a real thing, though little have we done to deserve so much. But it is pleasant to feel such an embracing care of kindliness. We are grateful for it, and doubly sad.

At last the day comes—the hateful day. All the staff insist upon accompanying the master in rickshaws, in procession, as when he returned from Korea. First goes Dana San and the luggage of Dana San; then follow Wataguchi, Snow-Lady, and their child; then the cook; then the kurumaya's wife and the Honourable Baby, resplendent in scarlet

and violet. At last the station is reached, and the servants form up into the background. The platform is crowded as usual, but when Wataguchi has secured our tickets we advance. Suddenly a startling sight perturbs our equanimity. There stands before us an unexpected agony. For, led in the hand of O Kami San, appears the Lady Little Willow Tree. O Kami San, under the sober daylight, seems more bent and withered than usual. With sad, twisted smiles she offers us her photograph. But Little Willow Tree is beautiful in black silk of the quietest design. She is full of delicate loveliness, affecting a drooping sorrow at our going. She timidly presents a packet of notepaper, bedizened with flowers and devils and monsters of fairy-tale. We are to write to her from beyond the pallid immensities of the ocean, from that strange land where the women clamour and talk. Willow Tree is full of an elegiac grace. Her laughter seems to mask a regret. Dear little lady, ours has been an innocent and casual companionship, the seed for no bitter blossom of regret, childish and purely pleasant; far across the world your memory will never fade in the memory of those whose hours you have made bright with your innocent, unselfish radiance. Dear little lady, to you we owe some of the gayest moments of laughter with which Japan has enchain'd our gratitude. You were altogether fresh and flower-like and lovable, without blame. You were a sphinx of delight. We

found you exquisite and tender and brilliant in your triumphant gaiety, of whom no dark desire could have won audience, had ever you come into range of any such. Pure and stainless blossom of charm, our last moments in Japan are to be saddened and glorified by your presence. Only they that know the position of a geisha realise how high an honour it is to be sped from Shimbashi by one. No greater proof of condescending favour could be given than the appearance of Willow Tree under the wing of O Kami San. Willow Tree abounds in tender speeches. Her air simulates sorrow ; she seems to weep, but half in burlesque. Her cheeks are clear and dry ; her smile appealing and subtle as ever. Taking our hands, she accompanies us down the platform, declaring the sorrow she has in our departure, and her hope that soon we shall return to Nippon. Her voice is sweetly tender, trailing in lovely cadences and sad inflections. Her face has an adorable pallor.

The train is in. Before our chosen carriage stands Wataguchi, who, with Snow-Lady and Mr. Desire, is to see us safe on board in Yokohama. We ascend. The carriage is filled with baggage and offerings. Outside are ranged our friends : Willow Tree, O Kami San, our faithful tradesmen, the cook, and countless other valuable acquaintances. We are engrossed by Willow Tree. "We are to send her a letter, and she will always think of us, and the happy merriment in

that Palace of the Thousand New Delights. She will languish till our return ; we are to hasten back swiftly to Japan. She will weep incessantly till we reappear!"—all in sweet, husky undertones, tragic with smiles and confidential pattings of the hand. Sweet and precious, dear and gracious, blameless little playmate ! How often shall we remember your words across the infinite roaring waters ! If only you feel the sorrow you affect—if only you feel the faintest echo of it ! Can such a thing be credible ? Why should a famous geisha regret our uncouth rubbish ? Condescension enough if she pretend to regret it—and yet, and yet, can it be all affectation—that tender sorrow ?

But suddenly, as it seems, after many premonitory whistles, the train proceeds to glide smoothly from the station, amid short cries from the attendant Japanese. Our last gaze is fixed upon the Lady Little Willow Tree. She stands, looking after the vanishing carriage with a soft smile ; then, ere due time, we see her turn away, and shamble off on patterned feet among the densities of the crowd. Her face, at the last, has the delicate impenetrability of a mask. She turns calmly and passes into the mob. She offers no intimation of emotion. Her air looks cool and calm ; her face pure and untroubled. Does that smile fade with the moment of her turning away ? This is not possible. But yet, she vanishes swiftly and without hesitation into the jungle of people.

U

And so we have our last sight of that dainty Little Willow Tree. Sweet and blessed, no time, no separation of space or years, can ever obliterate from us the tender sweetness of that dear ambiguous little smile of yours! Across the wilderness of time the ring of your laughter tingles in accustomed ears ; and the memory of your placid daintiness of grace fills the vacant places of life in the barren West. You were very simple and gentle, you dear little wonder-lady. Who could forget you?

We arrive in Yokohama ; we board our ship ; we take, disconsolate, our cabins. Wataguchi attends us, with Snow-Lady, and Mr. Desire, unrecognisable now, after months of loin-clothed service, in the wealth of a silvery silken kimono. To these we make our last farewells. Again they protest their grief. We offer wads of dollar-notes for comfort ; instantly those afflicted ones rush into the cabin and proceed to reckon the amounts. After this prudent action (which sounds like a theft from *Madame Chrysanthème*, but is justified by actual fact), the final of all the final farewells is transacted. Then, with heavy hearts, we watch Wataguchi, Snow-Lady, and the kurumaya descend the ladder and depart across the landing-stage under the blazing sun. There goes the incarnation of many radiant months, of much untiring patience, of infinite and unfailing kindness. Dear Wataguchi, you bore faithfully with our whims, with our stupidity, our impetuous indignation. You

were always smiling and cordial and helpful. You did sincerely all you could to make your master's life in Tokio a happy one. Your zeal was unflagging, your devotion indefatigable. You made half your master's joy in Tokio. And now, pass across the planks of the grilling hatoba ; carry with you the memory of a grateful heart, which recognises all your kind actions and all your kind attempts ! The thought of your cheery little smile, your caressing voice, your untiring willingness in service, will stand with us for ever as among the most beautiful things in Japan. You had faults, and we had more ; but if we could feel as confident of the smile of Amida upon our own lives as upon yours, we could front death without tremors. Who can do more than their best ? And that you did, without reserve or jealousy. The Holy Ones will have regard to all your devotion to our happiness. If you liked us, even a little, we have more than our reward ; but who shall pay you for your energy in our behalf, for all the patience with which you smoothed our way ? And yet, what is this ? You were only a faithful servant. But here is the highest ambition of the highest that live upon earth in service to the High and Holy Ones above. There is no nobler place for man to fill. As sermons unceasingly inform us, we all are servants. Very few of us, though, are faithful servants. Remember, then, our gratitude and our affection, and our deep desideration of your smiles, as we traverse the unending

waters to a land where service is measured not by gratitude, but by pay. You were simple and loyal and loving ; you seemed less our servant than our very familiar friend. And so, good-bye !

Slowly, under the rich haze of the golden afternoon, the great ship moves out upon the tranquillities of Tokio Bay. The land lies swamped in a tide of mellow light. The near hills are transparent ; the farther invisible. Yokohama lies dreaming under the glittering beams. The air is full of golden dust. Far up the dome of heaven are a few curling clouds, towering in the majesty of their convolutions towards the zenith ; but, for the rest, the sky is pure, filled only with the diffused dusk of gold. No sign is to be seen of the Holy Mountain.

So, amid the peaceful light, we glide out, out, out across the gentle water. Past us go drifting the last headlands of Japan. We are gliding out of the bay now towards the empire of the Pacific ; twilight draws down as we pass further and further from the shores of Nippon. In the rich glow peak and headland take a last blaze of loveliness. Already they are far in the distance. We have made our farewell to Japan.

So, farewell, Lady of Glittering Light ! Farewell, Gracious Garden of the Buddha ! Farewell, country of dulcet heats and melting colours ! Land of steaming moisture, land of iron cold, land of quivering mountains, of foaming lakes, of boiling rivers, you

are one with the phantoms of the horizon. No more shall we abide your rods of rain, your arrows of fierce sunlight; no more bask in the heavy sweetness of your fragrance, in your glorious Eden of wood and orchard. No more for us the bitterness of your snows, the dawning sweetness of your flowers, the promise of your spring, the tyrannous opulence of your summer. You are henceforth the casket, the shrine of our memories; some are heavy and sad, but for the most part they are radiant and very precious—gossamer joys woven in fairyland. Guard carefully our tender thoughts, the memories of the happiness you gave us, O land of glorified distance. Henceforth you are to us a holy place of sweet recollections, having no place on the burdened earth. You are an emanation from a sunset, a thing of fantasy, seen through the raptures of a dream. Rich land of verdure, of heavy trees and crowded blossoms, fade slowly, slowly from the horizon, that we may lose no sooner than we must, all trace of that paradise which once we have seen and never shall see again. For return to paradise is a mistake; things are never as they were. Better let a pleasure be cleanly dead and immortalised in memory. There is danger in galvanising to life the corpse of a pleasure past.

So the evening darkens. The sky, by now, is an arch of grey cloud, without relief of colour. The rippling water is pale and steely; out towards the

horizon dusk is descending upon the world in a dull obscurity of cold. Now, on the remote boundary of that ghostly plain, Japan is a mere rough wave of ebony upon the sea, very far away on the uttermost rim of the ocean. Soon it will have sunk from sight. And, over all, the vault of adamantine sky hangs sombre and cheerless, harmonising opportunely with our mood. The sun behind this ashen curtain is sinking. Towards his final departure below the land of his rising he tears a broad rent across the canopy of cloud. The cleft of flame widens across the west—a furnace of fiery orange dazzling amid the surrounding glooms. And still the cleavage widens and widens again, flooding the cold sky with a torrent of violent light. Now, on the edge of the world, Japan is only a dim vibration of darkness. But there, remote, vivid, splendid in his sombre immensity, stands far up against that red flare, the phantasmal form of Fuji-yama. Very far, very far above the fluttering little line of earth and the barren waste of water, we see, for the last time, his glory, unspeakable and overwhelming at the end. Now he is violent, ominous, terrible against the hell of scarlet fire in the sunset. Below, a vague twilight masks his base from all connection with that ripple of grey which lies obscured beneath the lower strip of cloud, stretching from one pole to the other pole. The Holy One looms awful, high in the flaming west. Never before has his majesty been so com-

manding, so fearfully splendid as now in its black solemnity against that blazing background. The whole picture has an effect infernal, not of this sphere. The tremendous peak seems to hover by itself, a portent of dark solidity, owning no link with land or sea. He is detached from creation, enthroned upon clouds, above the world of mortal life. It is our pride that the Holy One has deigned to reveal himself at our farewell. Bareheaded we adore the fading sacrosanctity in the moribund glow of the sunset.

Long we stand to watch the vanishing curves of that supreme thing, as slowly the radiance fades, and the sunset dies into the hardness of a cloudy dusk. Ere long the murk has so deepened that only the ghost of the mountain can be discerned far up against the ghost of the extinct illumination. Soon that also wanes into blackness, and the divine mountain passes from sight for ever in the impenetrable profundities of darkness. Now all lies level under the dominion of the iron night. The air has a chill, the sea a ghastly pallor, the deepening twilight is full of sombre tones. Dull gloom descends, obliterating the watery plain that is our Sorrowful Way from the land of all delight to the land of hustle and hideousness—that crude continent for whose discovery we owe the bitterest of all our debts to Spain. The days are cursed. But within our hearts abides an undying twilight of transfiguring recollection which chains

our worship and our love to the service of that august mountain and of the golden land over which he stands guardian for ever. Again, Dai Nipon Banzai!

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